THE TWO STOWAWAYS

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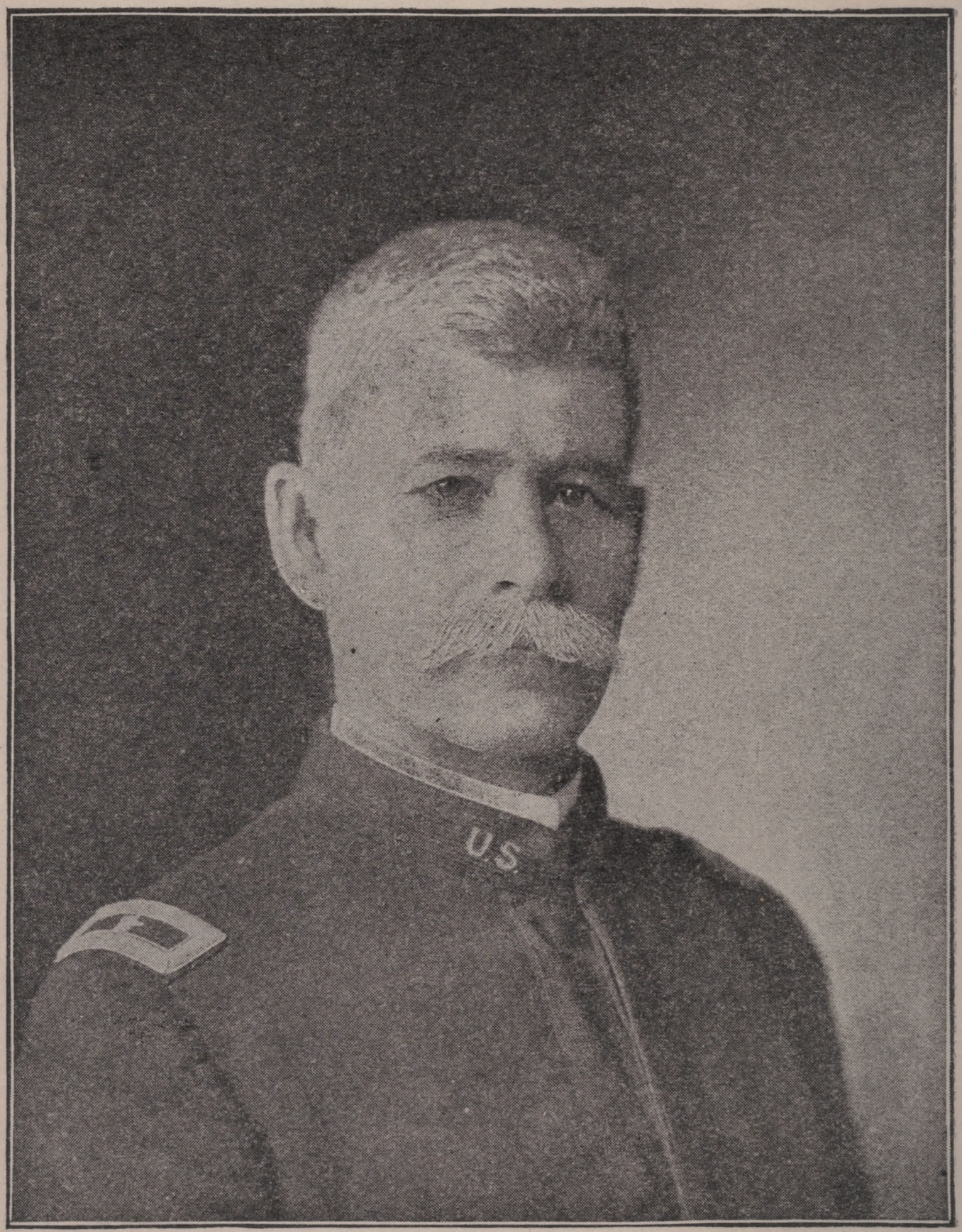

GENERAL H. W. LAWTON.

THE TWO STOWAWAYS

A TALE OF ADVENTURE

IN THE PHILIPPINES

BY

MARY G. BONESTEEL

FIRST EDITION

D. H. McBRIDE & CO.

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THE TWO STOWAWAYS.

CHAPTER I.

NUMBER "13," the end set of quarters at Randall barracks, was a "bachelor" establishment, consisting of Captain Williston and his only child, MacLean, a fine manly fellow of sixteen, known to all his friends in and out of the regiment as "Mac."

The domestic portion of the household was presided over by Mrs. Delia O'Hara and her husband, a dried-up, bow-legged, little, old ex-cavalry sergeant, who stood in wholesome awe of his good wife's brawn and tongue.

Mike had been the Captain's man, or striker, ever since he had left the cavalry, and his wife had been Mrs. Williston's nurse, when a child, and had faithfully followed her sweet young mistress when she married her soldier husband and went to Arizona, her first army station. Mac was born at Fort A——, and there,

three years later, the sweet young wife and mother died.

From the moment that Delia had closed her young mistress' tired, brown eyes in their last long sleep, she had taken little Mac into her warm, faithful heart, as her own.

Sergeant O'Hara was courting Delia at this time, but she would not listen to his suit for many months, until, finally, the old fellow went to the "Captain" in despair of his lady love's perversity. Delia at last consented to have Father Lee read the banns, when Captain Williston had promised her that nothing should separate her from Mac,—"Miss Mary's bye and mine," as she always said.

It was a wonder Mac was not utterly spoiled, for he grew up the idol of the whole house. His father found it almost impossible to ever say nay to this brown-haired, sweet-faced lad who looked at him with the soft dark eyes of his dead mother. Both Delia and Mike were quite as bad.

"Shure, the bye has kissed the blarney stone more than onct," Delia would say when Mac had coaxed something from her, she was sure wasn't good for him.

"And it's mesilf as is wishin' that Mrs. O'Hara was along wid the bye, whin he was

kissin' it," old Mike would answer with a twinkle in his sharp old eyes.

But then, Mike was the worst one in the family where spoiling Mac was concerned. He could refuse him nothing. He had taught him to ride, shoot, swim, and box.

"You wad niver think the lad belonged to the 'dough boys' fur he rides like a cavalry man, and none better, though I taught him mesilf." The old fellow would brag over all the company when Mac would fly madly by on his lively black pony.

Mac was sure he remembered his young mother; her beautiful face, on an exquisite ivory miniature, stood on the little stand which held her crucifix, an amethyst rosary, and a little statue of the Virgin Mother and the Divine Child. In his mind the boy always associated the two young mothers, and their sweet, silent influence kept him out of many a piece of boyish mischief.

The "51st" had only been at this eastern station two years, and Mac was not sure that he liked life in the east, as well as the free, jolly existence he had left out on the frontier, at the small four-company post in western Montana, where his father had been stationed.

His Grandmother McLean, a stately, white-haired old lady, who divided her time between her old-fashioned city home on Washington square in New York, and an older-fashioned one still, on the banks of the Hudson, near West Point, thought it high time Mac should become civilized, as she expressed it; and all the married aunts and uncles agreed, for they found Mac rather a firebrand amongst their own staid little flocks, when he paid them rather infrequent duty visits.

But the life had compensations as even Mac admitted. There was foot ball for one thing, he had just been elected captain of the High School team, and considered it a far greater matter than passing his "Regents" with honor, and I am afraid his father was almost of the same opinion.

Then he was captain of the High School cadets, simply as a matter of knowledge and rank; for his father was senior captain of the "51st," so ranked all the other boys' fathers. Mac was a very good drill-master and disciplinarian.

"For all the world like the Captain," old Mike told Delia after he had hobbled down to the school to see Mac drill his company.

" A chip of the old block," said the old man, as if no higher praise could be given the boy.

" He may look like his mother, and he does, God rest her sweet sowl," continued the old fellow, " but his voice, his figger, and ivery action is as like his father as can be."

" Well, he might do worse," commented Mrs. O'Hara with a sniff. She was in one of her " tantrums " as Mac called them, when no prospect pleased, and man was particularly vile.

This was too much for old Mike, for the Captain to him was a model of all that was fine, honorable, and brave. He simply walked off leaving his better half to work off her temper in the sponge cake she was beating vigorously.

It was at this rather inauspicious moment that Mac's beaming face appeared at the kitchen door, holding out a pair of very dirty foot-ball trousers, in the knee of one a big hole gaped.

" Say, Delia, will you have these patched by four sharp this afternoon? Good, stout canvas mind you,— we are going to play the St. Alban ' Tigers ' Saturday, and I don't want to be scattered all over the field."

" Why your father allows you to play that

hathenish, bloody game is what beats me," was the reply Mac received; but Delia motioned to him to lay the trousers on a kitchen chair.

It was a cold, gray November day and the bright, warm kitchen, even if Delia was cross, seemed very cheery and inviting; so Mac sat down and watched the cake finished up and popped into the oven.

"Lunch most ready, Delia?" he asked.

"It will be at one o'clock as usual."

"Madge asked me to stop there, but I thought I wouldn't; I saw the salad in the pantry at breakfast, so I thought we were going to have a pretty good lunch at home today." Mac's eyes twinkled, Delia loved to cook for her boy, and it worried her to have him stay out to meals.

"Madge Stuart asked you, did she? Well, gurls gets more furrad ivery day; Irish stew and bread and butter is all you'd get at the Stuart's, a poor captain with five childer. We're goin' to have sweet breads, celery salad, strawberry-jam, and cake."

"That's a dandy layout. Delia, say, why can't I ask Madge over to share,— can I, that's a dear?"

Delia's face softened, it was like her boy to want to share, but all she said was:

"Well, hurry up about it, and don't keep your father waiting."

"I'll telephone," replied Mac, already half way up the back stairs.

The Stuart quarters were quite a ways down the "Line," and, as all the five were Mac's special friends, they had rigged up a telephone from old, condemned material which the post signal officer had turned over to them. It was a rather primitive affair but did well enough. They were all proficient in using the flag or "wig wag" code, but this was too slow a method for ordinary use.

Mac was learning telegraphy in his spare moments, up in the sergeant-major's office. As soon as he was proficient he meant to teach Madge and she could hand down the art to the rest of the tribe.

Delia chuckled at the conversation she heard, for the kitchen window was open, and Mac's youthful voice high and clear.

"Hello! Is it Madge? All right. Come over to lunch. Delia is as cross as two sticks; she and Mike have been scrapping, I know, but she's got a fine lunch — What? Oh, yes, sweet breads and celery salad.

"Sorry, but I can't. My team practices at four sharp. Good-bye. Meet you on the front porch."

It was a jolly little lunch party. Captain Williston enjoyed the young people's fun and was never in the least a restraint upon them.

Father and son never sat down at the table without a feeling of intense, silent thanksgiving, for there had been many weeks after the terrible Santiago campaign when neither of them had thought such a thing would be possible.

Captain Williston had been severely wounded in that historic charge up San Juan; he had been carried to the field hospital, where he contracted typhoid fever and was brought back to Montauk a wreck of the tall, stalwart soldier who had led his men so gallantly on the 1st of July.

There had been a dreadful two days in July, the 3d and 4th, when Captain Williston's name had appeared among the dead. Mac had shut himself up in his room and neither Mike nor Delia could make him come out. He wouldn't or couldn't speak nor eat. They had Madge come over, but with no better success. On the morning of the 5th of July, however, the

post commander received a cable from Playa del Este:

"Tell Mac slightly wounded. Don't worry.
(Signed.) Williston."

When Delia took this up to Mac, it was only then the boy broke down and threw himself into Delia's loving arms, and, big, strapping fellow that he was, head and shoulders over Delia, she took him in her lap and wept and crooned over him as she used to when he was her "baby."

Not a single cracker had been fired nor even a Roman candle set off in the barracks that dreadful 4th, but the children made up for it on the 5th, for, though the "51st" had been in the thick of the fight at Santiago, no officer had been killed. A cable had been received from the colonel to this effect, at the same time Mac received his.

It was early in August that the captain reached Montauk, and was met by Mac and old O'Hara, who brought their hero home by easy stages; the Williston and McLean families all insisting upon visits.

It was only after a battle royal that poor Mike had been allowed to go, Delia insisting that she was the proper one.

"You go?" her husband protested, "an me who has been the Captain's own man this twinty years, me as has bin through many an Injun fight wid him, me sthay behint? Not if me name is Michael O'Hara."

For the only time in his married career the old fellow asserted himself so strongly that he gained his point.

It was now the middle of November and the Captain, though thin and pale, was looking more like himself, and was now on duty once more.

"There's one thing, dad, dear, if you go to war any more *I'm going with you*," Mac would emphatically announce.

"God grant we won't have any more fighting," the captain would reply, "but I'm afraid we shall have trouble with the insurgents at Manila. I don't trust nor admire Aguinaldo."

"I have begun Spanish, so as to be ready," answered Mac.

"Who is your teacher?" asked his father with his grave smile.

"A recruit in the company from Oklahoma, the men call him 'Dago.' He talks the lingo all right; though, of course, it must be Mexican Spanish. I guess I could make myself understood."

"I learned it myself at West Point," said the captain, "but '*tienne usted mi sombrero*' is every blessed word I remember. Last summer, at Tampa, we were all furnished with a small book of military words and phrases in Spanish, so that we would be able to talk to the enemy if necessary. Oddly enough the Mauser that went through my chest, bored a hole in my manual of military Spanish, so that I really found it very useful, though not in the way the War Department had intended. Go on with your Spanish lessons, Mac, but don't get the idea of Manila into your head, for nothing will induce me to take you when the regiment is ordered."

"Why, father, you speak of the regiment's going as a sure thing," said Mac, surprised.

"Well, Mac, I do think it is only a question of time. I believe next summer will see us campaigning in the Philippines."

* * * * * * * *

Once a week regularly, Captain Williston, Jr., of the Randall High School Eleven, had led his young athletes to victory on their native gridiron, but the big game of the season was to come off on Thanksgiving, when they were to tackle the Union College men.

Captain Mac had his men under strict discipline and training. They practiced every spare moment, always with a sympathetic audience of High School girls and boys to cheer them on with their slogan of victory.

"Randall, Randall, Rah! *Rah!* RAH!
Pan and Handle, Rah! *Rah!* RAH!"

the last Rahs a slow chant.

At Madge's suggestion each girl had made herself a small silk flag of the class colors, dark blue with a R. H. S. in white. The combination was very pretty and effective.

Delia alone of all Mac's friends and sympathizers remained cold and unappreciative. She made dire prophecies regarding the Thanksgiving dinner, which was an annual event to which the Stuarts, all of them, were invariably invited, with three lone bachelors to round out the dozen.

Madge felt like shaking her, but instead shook her fist at her through a crack in the kitchen door, as she whispered to Mac: "The old prophet of evil, she's enough to make you lose the game and break every bone in your body. I would wish that her old pies might turn out heavy, only as we have to eat them, it would be a sort of 'biting off our noses to spite our faces.'

"Mother says that is a dreadfully vulgar expression, I suppose it is, but it is certainly very expressive."

"Oh, I don't mind her croaking one bit, and I don't want the mince and pumpkin pies heavy, if you please. Remember, *I* haven't so much as had a taste of one this fall,— no pastry, is a strict rule in our diet," said Mac.

At last Thanksgiving dawned, clear, cold, and gray,— ideal foot-ball weather. Just as Mac was finishing his dumbbell exercise, the telephone rang vigorously.

"Hello! How's your nerve?"

It was Madge's voice, but all five Stuarts were at the 'phone, too, all talking together.

"Tip top," responded Mac, genially, "and how're yourselves?"

"The same."

"I'll meet you all in five minutes and we'll take a four-mile spin on our wheels before breakfast.

"O. K. Say, what's that noise I hear? *What?* A mascot? Fine, we may need it before we're through. Good-bye."

It was a queer, choked sound Mac had heard over the wire, and he tried his best to get Madge to tell him what the mascot was,

as they spun around the parade four times; but he did not succeed, and even the four younger Stuarts, Tom, Elinor, Bob, and Betty were not to be bribed to disclose the secret.

"It's better luck not to know," Madge insisted.

When Mac first caught sight of the Union team as they trifled with the ball on the field, his heart misgave him.

"We are out-weighed," he mentally ejaculated, and then and there decided upon a change of tactics. Their usual dashing, aggressive "off-the-reel" play, would not do with these lumbering, elephantine bunch of athletes, who were receiving a generous amount of applause as they spread out over the gridiron.

Just then Mac heard a shrill, piercing rooster's crow, and, looking up he caught sight of Madge's merry face, in her arms was a small white game cock with his wings and tail painted a bright blue, while a huge bow of blue and white adorned his neck.

"Our mascot," he thought, as their eyes met. "Well, we certainly shall need one before the game is over." Madge smiled at him encouragingly and waved her flag and the mascot vigorously. She evidently was not

daunted by the looks of these heavy-weights, so Mac cast all his fears to the winds, and thought now only of victory.

The Union men fairly swooped down on the High School boys as soon as the ball was kicked into play, and before they could gather for a stand, had bored through the "Blue and White;" but the gamey, nervy little line stalled off the onslaught and aroused the wildest applause from their supporters by their brilliant defense.

But brawn told; and, though the struggling knights of the pigskin on the High School held a firm line, the Union men worked the oval over the line for a touchdown, counting five points.

There was the greatest enthusiasm amongst Union sympathizers, while their "rooters" rent the air with their victorious cries.

The "Blue and White" took their defeat in good humored silence; not so tne girl friends, led by Madge; they cheered gayly and waved their silken banners as if a touchdown and five points against their team was as nothing. Madge held her watch in one hand while she waved the crowing mascot in the other.

"Girls," she was saying, "I'm sure it was over the time limit and won't count."

Mrs. Stuart was chaperoning Madge and a party of her schoolmates, but she was quite as enthusiastic as the girls, waving her colors, and thinking all the time how glad she was that Tom and Bob were not old nor big enough for foot ball.

And Madge was right, for the enthusiasm of the visitors and their friends was cut short by the referee announcing that the time limit had been exceeded, and therefore, the touch-down could not be allowed.

Union kicked off in fine style, but Mac caught the ball and made a magnificent run with it to the center of the field, and so the battle waged with varying fortunes for both sides.

The second half was as hotly and gamily contested as the first. Every inch of ground was fought over; the time was pretty nearly up when "Blue and White," after a fierce fight, had gotten the ball within ten yards of Union's goal. They were still game, but pretty well exhausted, having had a terrific pounding and mauling from Union's heavy-weights.

Suddenly, at a mysterious signal, the quarterback passed the ball to Mac, who shot forward like an arrow from a bow.

"They can't touch him," yelled the "Blue

and White" chorus; and indeed the whole crowd went wild with excitement. They didn't touch him, and Mac reached the goal, made a touchdown, with both teams on top of him, a confused and yelling mass.

Suddenly the yells ceased, there was an anxious silence; some one was being carried off the field as the referee announced, "Time up." A goal was kicked off by the full-back; making the score 6 to 0 in favor of the High School.

Meantime poor Mac, unconscious, was being taken off, not knowing he had made the star play of the day and won a glorious victory for his team.

The "Blue and White" "rooters" were chanting a new verse just improvised for the occasion, to the time which was their war cry and slogan of victory:

Randall, your star is shining,
McLean, for you we're pining
And we can kick the lining
Out of all who tackle you.

But alas for poor Mac, he would do no more kicking for some time to come.

Madge had instinctively shut her eyes for an instant when Mac went down; she opened

them as he was being carried off the field unconscious, the blood streaming from a deep gash on his forehead, his father and young Dr. Barton, the post surgeon, in attendance. She heard the referee announce that Williston had been injured in the mêlée, but it was hoped that it was nothing serious.

But it was pretty serious after all, for, besides being badly cut about the face and head, the doctor found that Mac's right arm was broken below the elbow.

Delia received the bad news, which Madge flew ahead to tell her, so she might be ready, with an "I-told-you-so" air which was very trying, but Madge kept her temper and flew around such a willing young helper that Delia visibly softened.

It was a very white, big-eyed, young athlete who occupied the easy couch in the parlor that evening, for he had insisted upon the Thanksgiving dinner taking place as usual.

After all it was quite a jolly dinner, it was such a relief to know that Mac's injuries were not serious.

Mac, himself, with his face done up in strips of court plaster and his arm in a sling, was as gay as possible.

"No pie after all," he said merrily to Madge.

"I shall have to wait for Christmas and plum pudding, but I'm afraid I shall get terribly behind in class, Madge. Geometry and Greek are no joke this term."

Madge thought a moment, then said:

"If you like, Mac, and mother is willing, I might come over every evening after dinner, and we'll do our lessons together."

"You're a brick, Madge," was Mac's warm but slangy reply. "Dr. Barton means to keep me out two weeks, at least, and we shall be reviewing for the January 'Regents,' you know."

Mrs. Stuart, on being asked for her consent to the plan, was perfectly willing. Mac was like one of her own boys; his young mother had been her most intimate friend in the regiment, and the lonely boy had always found the Stuart's house a second home.

Captain Williston, who overheard them discussing the plan, offered to give Mac two hours every day right after lunch, to hear his lessons, while the second lieutenant of the company, Mr. Wayne, told them if they got "stuck" in geometry, just to call on him for assistance.

"With so much help I shall probably be so far ahead of my class when I get back to

school I won't need to study very hard the rest of the term," Mac laughingly remarked.

But, though he tried to be as cheerful as possible, Mrs. Stuart saw the effort he was making, so she marshalled her small flock quite early and took them home in spite of the boy's gay protests.

The other guests were not long in following her example.

Mac's last conscious thought was, as he dropped off into a sleep of exhaustion, "If the regiment were ordered to Manila now, dad would never let me go with this helpless, broken arm." He was still counting upon gaining his father's permission to go, if they should be ordered.

CHAPTER II.

THE broken arm healed rapidly, and in two weeks Mac, with the injured member in a sling, was back at school. But his father and the doctor had forbidden foot ball again that season; however, as Christmas with skating and snow-shoeing was approaching, this was not so bad as it might have been.

"Well, Mac," said the captain one morning at breakfast, "I have a plan in my head which will have to have your assistance in the carrying out of its details; will you have the time to help me out?"

"Yes, indeed, sir."

"I want this Christmas to be one of especial thanksgiving for you and me. God has been very good to us, my son; there were many days when I lay in that fever hospital at Siboney, that I never expected to see you again, dear old lad. Then and there, I made the Sacred Heart a promise which I now want to keep to the best of my ability this Christmas."

Mac choked a little over his coffee, he could not bear, even yet, the mention of those dreadful days of suspense. "Yes, dad."

"My plan is to give a merry, happy Christmas to about a dozen boys and girls, who would, otherwise, have no Christmas. Leave out all the children who attend the Sunday schools, they will have a tree, also the soldiers' children, the ladies of the post will provide for them; all save Sergeant Connors' youngsters, they must have a very special invitation to my party."

Mac knew why his father wished this, without asking. The Connors family held a very warm place in the hearts of both father and son; for it was old Connors, who, midst a storm of shot and shell on that terrible 1st of July, had carried his wounded Captain to the rear; and, although shot in the arm, while doing so, managed, with the help of one of the mule packers, to get the unconscious officer on a pack mule, and so to the field hospital, seven miles to the rear. Mac never met the sergeant's youngsters down town, but he treated them all round to candy and soda; his boyish way of showing his gratitude.

"I am going to give you a hundred dollars to spend for my party, and I appoint Mrs.

Stuart, Madge, and Delia a committee of three to assist you in carrying out the details. I should like to give our guests a good old-fashioned Christmas dinner, so we shall need Delia's help there.

"Mrs. Stuart, Madge, and yourself shall ask the guests, and buy the gifts for them; I only stipulate for two things, first I want 'Tatroog' asked."

"Tatroog" was a half-witted French lad, the town bootblack, who possessed absolutely no relations, and whose name from "*tête rouge*," on account of his red hair, had become anglicized into "Tatroog." He was a great friend and enthusiastic admirer of "my Captain," as he always spoke of Captain Willis-ton. He brought his hero great bunches of flowers and would gladly have shined his boots free a dozen times a day, had he been allowed to do so.

Mac laughed. "He shall be number one, dad."

"Then my second condition," continued the captain, "is especially for the ladies of the committee. Each guest must have some pretty ornamental gift besides the useful and necessary ones."

"All right, sir, we will do our best. I think

it will make a splendid 'Thanksgiving,' and, if I win the 'D. A. R. Historical Essay' prize, I would like to chip in with you, dad. It's a twenty-dollar gold piece. Of course, there is a big *if*, but I mean to try my very best."

"What is the subject of your essay," asked the Captain.

"'Burgoyne's Campaign.' If they had only given us the '*Spanish-American War*,' I would stand a much better show for it."

"Perhaps," assented his father, "but you know, Mac, that history to be impartial should never be written until at least a hundred years has elapsed. Are there many contestants for the prize?"

"No, sir, not very many; Madge and myself from the post, about a dozen boys and girls from town, and a country boy, James Marvin, a queer kind of a duck, but awfully clever and bright. He's awfully poor, and looks starved. I've put him down for number two on our list. He is very friendless, the fellows don't like him — he is so stand-offish.

"He sleeps in a little room off of Professor Barton's office. He helps the janitor about the building, to pay for his room rent. He does all his own cooking, too, on a tiny gas stove; so he will appreciate a good dinner."

"Well, we've made a good start with our guests already," said the captain. "I think, Mac, it would be a good plan to ask Father Smith to help us with the invitations, he will know every friendless, homeless body in the town."

Mrs. Stuart, Madge, and Delia, were all delighted to help with Captain Williston's Christmas charity.

"Only I don't want it to seem a '*charity*,'" the Captain told them.

"'When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind. And thou shalt be blessed,'" quoted Mrs. Stuart softly. "We understand, dear Captain."

Delia, took to the dinner part of the program at once, and invited Mike to assist; she also deigned to confer with him in an unusually benevolent fashion.

"We'll borrow the big extra 'round top' from the colonel and borrow what chairs we need from the quartermaster; we can seat fourteen easy."

To all of which Mike cordially agreed, promising on his part to provide the tree for the festivities.

As Christmas drew near, the Williston's quarters took on an air of great festivities;

holly and mistletoe wreathed the windows, while great strings of evergreens hung over the folding-doors. The children made and hung all the decorations, with Mike's invaluable help. There was also a delicious odor of spicy fruit cake and plummy pudding floating through "No. 13."

Mac declared that these tantalizing smells made the Advent days of abstinence, doubly hard to keep.

Friday evenings, Mac and the young Stuarts spent in picking out nuts, slicing citron, and stoning raisins, for Delia despised the modern labor-saving stoneless raisins, and would not have them in her famous fruit cake and mince pies. The children groaned at the extra work; but knew better than to argue the point with Delia.

After all it was really great fun, and many merry evenings were spent as they sat around the dining-room table, laughing and joking.

Captain Williston, would look over the top of his book, with his rather sad, grave smile at the happy young faces, and mentally thank God that he had been spared to his boy, his and *hers*, his beautiful young wife, who would never grow old and gray as he now was growing.

Both Madge and Mac were working very hard at their prize essays. The conditions of the contest were very simple, and left to the honor of the students. Both Professor Barton, the superintendent, and Miss Walcott, the principal, were "great on honor," in the school parlance; and as a rule the system worked very well. Any High School pupil was at liberty to enter the contest, but the contestants were to receive absolutely no outside help, nor were they to discuss or read each others papers. The essays were to be between 1,500 and 2,000 words long, and to be handed in by December 15th. The name of the fortunate winner of the prize would be announced on the 20th, two days before school would close for the Christmas holidays.

Professor Barton and Miss Walcott were to be the judges.

Mac had a friend in the village who came to his assistance by throwing open his library to him.

Judge Bailey was a remarkable old man, nearly ninety, yet his mind was as clear as that of any young man. He was an old-fashioned scholar, with a deep contempt of modern men and methods.

But he and Mac had begun an acquaintance-

ship over the judge's runaway pug, "Dr. Johnson." Mac returned the truant, and made himself so agreeable that he was invited to come again; so, finally he and the old man had become very good friends indeed.

Judge Bailey's library was famous for its collection of Revolutionary histories, memoirs and various curious old folios and documents of all sorts.

Indeed the old judge himself was so near to Revolutionary times that Mac thought him the most interesting history of all.

But all the time that Mac was delving deeply into this storehouse of facts, he had rather a mean feeling about it, as though he had an advantage over his schoolmates; so, one day he told his old friend all about the contest, of how hard the others were trying for the prize, and of what a help this fine library would be to them. The old judge said nothing but "Humph!" when Mac ended his little appeal.

After Mac had gone home, the judge sat down and wrote to Professor Barton, saying that at the request of his young friend, Master McLean Williston, he would be pleased to have the contestants for the history prize make use of his library every day from four to six, until the contest closed.

Mac was hailed as a public benefactor, and warmly thanked by all of his schoolmates who were trying for the prize, that is by all save James Marvin, who passed him by with his usual look of sullen dislike.

"Never mind, we'll thaw him out at our Christmas feast," Mac thought, smiling back genially.

The days flew by rapidly and all the essays, neatly copied and tied with the school colors, were handed in promptly Monday morning.

The judges, Professor Barton and Miss Walcott, would take the week to examine and pass upon the essays, announcing the fortunate one the following Monday, two days before the vacation.

The Friday before, about five o'clock, Mr. Barton and Miss Walcott came into the office, their hands filled with neat-looking papers which they were discussing as they entered.

"Professor, I think we are agreed," Miss Walcott was saying, "Mac gets the prize, James Marvin first honorable mention, and Madge Stuart the second."

"I think, Miss Walcott, I would like to go over Mac's and James' papers once more, they are so nearly equal. Can you spare a half hour now?"

"I am sorry, Mr. Barton, but I have an engagement at which I am now due; but if you will bring them around early to-morrow, I can give my whole time and attention to them."

"Very well," sighed Mr. Barton; he was very tired. "I will lock them up here for to-night, there is not a soul in the building, even young Marvin has gone out in the country to spend Sunday with his old grandmother; I saw him start."

So saying, Mr. Barton laid the essays carefully in his desk, locked it, put the key in his pocket and he and Miss Walcott walked off, locking the office door behind them.

But, after all, their conversation had been overheard; James Marvin having returned to his room for something he had forgotten, was an eager listener to every word.

An ugly, threatening look came over his face when he heard Miss Walcott say she thought Mac had won the prize. He instantly determined that Mac's essay should be lost or destroyed, and it was really a very easy matter. No one but himself knew that the key of the office desk would open Mr. Barton's private one. Marvin had practiced several dishonesties with this same means, and had never been suspected. As for the office door

being locked, it was an easy matter to get out of the window which opened into the outer hall, and make his way out of the cellar window.

James' good angel strove in vain to help the boy, but smothering the voice of conscience, he quickly accomplished his evil task.

Opening the desk he pushed Mac's essay down between the linings where it was completely hidden; somehow he could not bring himself to destroy it. Getting through the window as he had planned, he was soon outside of the building, unseen by anyone.

Great was the commotion and consternation at school Monday, when the loss of one of the prize papers was announced.

Calling the school to order, Mr. Barton, looking very grave, said that the judges had decided that Mr. James Marvin had won the prize, while Miss Madge Stuart's paper had received honorable mention.

Then, allowing the tumultuous applause to subside, Mr. Barton continued:

"I feel it my duty, in view of the disagreeable circumstances of the affair, to inform the school that an essay which stood an equal chance to win the prize with that of Mr. Marvin's, has been *stolen from my desk*, when and

how, I shall do my best to ascertain. Both desk and door were locked, and there was no one in the school when Miss Walcott and I left it, about five o'clock.

"But we decided that it would be unjust to Mr. Marvin and Miss Stuart not to render our decisions, so we have awarded the essays as I have just said; but I shall not rest until the thief is discovered."

Madge's eyes happened accidentally to fall upon James Marvin as Mr. Barton spoke, and she saw a quick look of guilty terror flash over his face at Mr. Barton's stern words. She suspected him from that moment, but kept her suspicions to herself.

What a storm of indignation there was, the school was aroused and indignant as it never had been before, nothing else was discussed that day, and it began the next, until Mac spoke up.

He was standing with a group of boys and girls in the neutral playground; indignation ran high, and a very hot discussion was going on when Mac impulsively broke in with:

"I say, let's agree to let the whole thing slide, don't let it spoil our Christmas holidays; we are all glad that Marvin won, and we know

there is not a thief in our school, so here's to '91 *(Marvin's class)*:

Rah, rah, Randall!
Rah, rah, '91.
We've burned the student's candle,
NOW we're in for fun!
Rah! *rah!* RAH!"

So, after all, thanks to Mac, school closed pleasantly, amidst laughter and song.

"Bless that boy," said Miss Walcott, who had overheard Mac's little speech, "he has accomplished more for 'peace on earth' in two minutes than I have been able to do in two days."

CHAPTER III.

MAC had invited James Marvin to spend Christmas with him, on Monday at school, and at the same time congratulated him heartily upon winning the essay prize.

His invitation had been sullenly refused at first, but Mac was not to be repulsed. He insisted upon Marvin's coming, and, thinking possibly the reason he declined was that he lived so far out in the country, he asked him to stay over night.

James gave a surly assent. His manner puzzled genial Mac, and provoked him a bit. "You don't like to do a fellow a kindness and have him look at you as if he would like an excuse to hit you one under the ear," he thought. "Never mind, dad will thaw him out, and somehow I know he don't like me."

Christmas day dawned bright and beautiful with just enough snow for Santa Claus to drive his reindeers and sleigh.

The Stuarts and Willistons attended the five

o'clock Mass, which Mac served, the older members receiving Holy Communion.

It was a quaint custom in the old church which had stood there for nearly a century, for the children to sing the "Adeste Fideles," which they did with great sweetness and power, their fresh young voices reminding their careworn, sorrowful elders of the angelic music which had announced to the humble shepherds the birth of the Saviour of the world.

The soft light of the sanctuary lamp fell directly on Mac's curly, brown head, as he knelt in fervent prayer with a look upon his boyish face which made Captain Williston pray.

"God bless my boy, and keep him good and pure for his mother, and help me to take her place."

* * * * * * * *

It had been decided that the Stuarts would dine at home and have their own Christmas festivities before coming over to help with the Williston's. As it was, even the borrowed extra large "round top" from the colonel's was a bit crowded by the time all the guests and the two hosts were seated,— fourteen in all.

Mike in his best ex-cavalry full dress, white gloves and all, announced, with a flourish, that dinner was served, and marshalled them out to a sight many of the poor homeless ones present had never seen.

The table, beautiful with Christmas roses, cut glass, and shining silver, made them realize that their host was giving them of his very best, as he would to his most honored guests.

The eyes of the lonely girl, who taught the little French district school, filled with sudden tears. She was too poor to afford her fare to the little Canadian village she called home, and she had expected to spend the holy day in her cold lodging, but Madge had heard of her and Mac had written her a special invitation.

"Tatroog's" mouth and eyes were opened wide, and the look of astonishment remained all evening.

Even James softened up and lost his usual sullen, disagreeable manner beneath Captain Williston's cordial smile and genial hospitality.

And what a good dinner Delia gave them! No "French fixings and fussings," as she herself said; and Mike waited upon each one of these poor ones, as if he had been serving the general of the army.

After dinner the Stuarts arrived, young and old, also Sergeant Connors and his entire six. Mac and Madge disappeared for a few moments, then the parlor doors were rolled back and a huge tree stood revealed in all its shining splendor.

Mac and Mike had tramped the country for miles around to find one big and beautiful enough for the occasion.

Such gifts as hung from its generous branches!

The homesick little teacher received a silver mounted purse, with a round-trip ticket to Saint Pierre, and a bright new five-dollar gold piece.

"Tatroog" a fur cap, a pair of gloves, and a heavy overcoat. The younger guests all sorts of useful and pretty things.

James Marvin was the last name to be called. Madge handed him a substantial boyish pocket-book, saying, "Open it."

When he saw two crisp ten-dollar bills he mumbled out a confused thank you and actually fled from the room in apparently the most ungracious way.

"Well, of all the ungrateful," began Madge, but her mother stopped her impetuous speech, gently.

"I saw his face, daughter. Poor boy, he meant no ingratitude, he rushed off to hide his emotion."

Mrs. Stuart was right, the poor fellow, thoroughly overcome with the generous spirit of his kindly hosts, was softened as he had never been before in all his lonely, friendless young life. His dishonorable secret weighed upon him like lead, but he had not the courage to confess it and make restitution. He had been brought up with only the barest of religious training, a little chapel going and Bible reading comprised the whole of it. He returned to the room presently with a curiously softened look upon his rather hard young face.

"I knew dad would thaw him out," Mac whispered to Madge.

But the girl thought to herself, "The coals of fire are beginning to burn," for the whole school knew now that it was Mac's paper which had mysteriously disappeared, and Madge was not the only one who suspected that young Marvin could give some information regarding it.

At last the happy guests took leave. James went up stairs to his room leaving Mac to say good night to his father.

"Have you had a happy Christmas, my son?" the Captain asked.

"The best I ever remember, sir, and thank you once more for all my lovely gifts to-day."

"It has been a happy day for me, too, Mac. You have made my thank-offering a great success. I know your mother is proud of her boy to-night. Now, good-night, and God bless you and grant us many more 'Happy Christmases' together."

But the sentries were calling three o'clock before Captain Williston turned out his light. He had been keeping a vigil beside a lonely grave in the far-away South, a grave over which roses and violets bloomed all the year around, where Mac's young mother lay quietly sleeping.

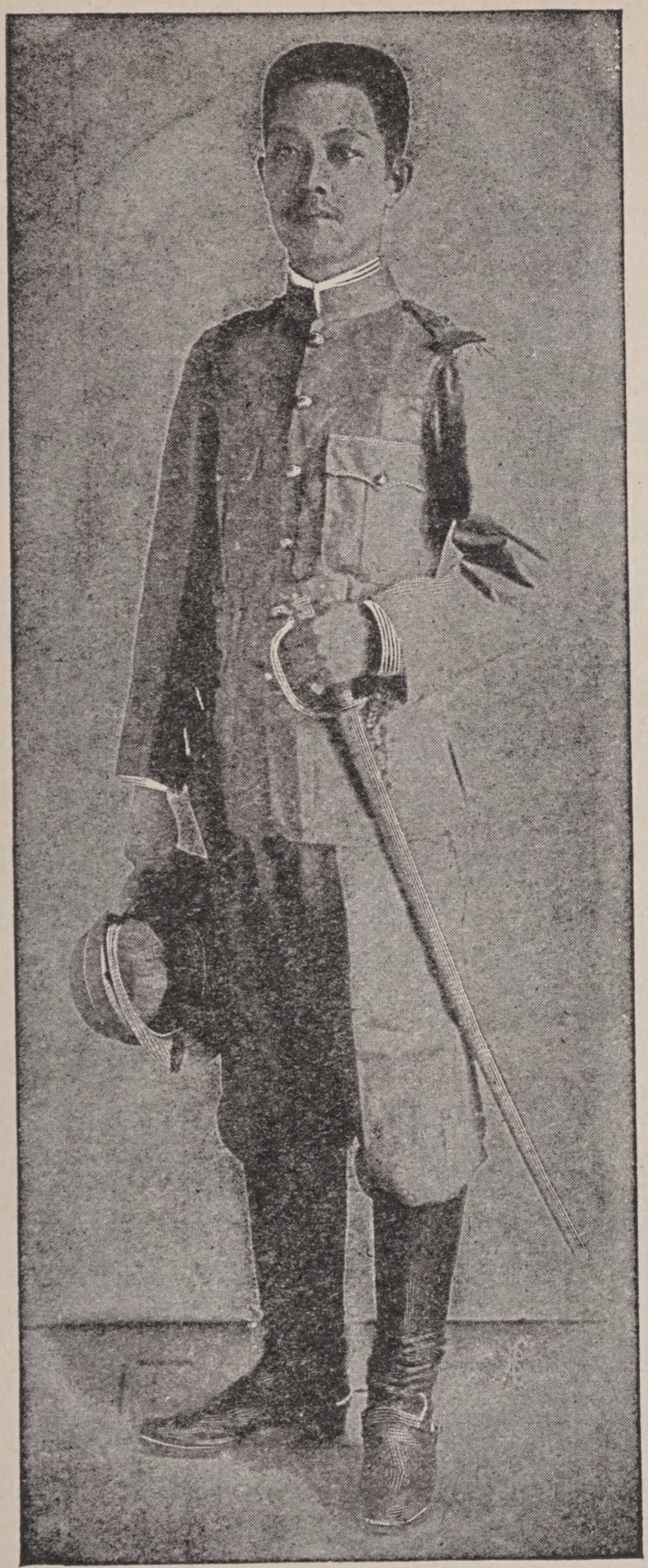
CHAPTER IV.

THE next morning the young people of the post decided to have a skating party; the Saranac between the upper dam at the pulp mill and the lower one at the gas works was frozen over as smooth as glass, and was strong enough to bear safely, if no one skated too close to the dams.

The boys and girls met at ten o'clock on Captain Williston's porch; and such a merry crowd. James would have liked to have gotten out of going with them, his miserable guilty secret made him feel very little like merry making; but they would not listen to any excuse.

Mac, with kindly boyish generosity had insisted upon James trying the fine new skates which were one of his own Christmas gifts.

"You are out and out the best skater in the High School, old man, so take them, and do your best to cut out those Princeton and Cornell fellows that are up here for the vacation; they are such braggers."



EMILIO AGUINALDO Y FAMY

It was a glorious morning for sport, and even James threw off his depression and joined in the mirth and fun. An unfortunate chance remark upset all.

Madge was skating swiftly up the river when James joined her. He had a shy, awkward admiration for the bright, warmhearted girl, but he hardly ever dared speak a word to her. Even now he asked her very humbly if he might skate with her.

"Why, certainly, James," Madge replied, trying to make her answer seem cordial and pleasant, but she found it difficult, for she honestly could not like the boy.

As they flew along together, the bracing air, the exhilaration of James' favorite sport, one in which he knew he excelled all, went to his head and made him forget his guilt and his usual shyness.

He talked, and talked well.

"How well you skate, James," remarked Madge. "No one can equal it, not even Mac."

"Well, it's the only thing I can beat him at," was the quick, rather bitter reply, "even his essay was better than mine."

"What do *you* know about Mac's essay?" demanded Madge quickly, all her half forgotten suspicions roused instantly.

"Why, nothing, nothing. Why should I? What do you mean?" was the hesitating, confused answer.

"Oh, I don't mean anything more than *you* do," said Madge significantly. "It seemed rather a peculiar remark to make, *under the circumstances*," she concluded coldly, then turned and left him abruptly.

A wave of hot anger, then intense shame and misery swept over poor James. "She suspects me," he groaned inwardly. And he skated on, his eyes blinded with sudden tears; but there was still no thought of confessing his misdeed.

Preoccupied by his own bitter thoughts, James did not notice that he had skated beyond the safety line, when loud shouts from behind warned him of his danger.

He stopped quickly and had half turned to go back, when, with a loud crack, the ice beneath him gave way, and he sank in the waters which ran very swiftly here. As he came up, he managed to hold on to the edge of the ice and shouted for help, which came almost as he called.

Mac had come to the rescue with all the speed of which he was capable. Throwing himself cautiously down on the thin ice he

stretched out at full length and seized the drowning boy by his collar and held on with grim determination, knowing that help was coming, and all would be well if only the ice would bear.

For one terrible instant Madge closed her eyes, expecting Mac would break through, then with a fervent prayer for help, she called to the other boys to break off a fence rail and hurry to the spot.

It was not the first accident on the ice that the boys had seen, so they knew exactly what to do. The long fence rail was pushed out carefully to Mac, one boy crawled out and released Mac, whose arm was numb with the cold when he came back.

Another boy slid himself along cautiously, then the two together lifted James out, now unconscious.

It was a brave, plucky rescue all around; but Mac had borne the brunt of it, he was wet and frozen down to his waist. Carrying James on an improvised litter, the whole crowd started back to the post on a quick run. Fortunately the barracks was close at hand.

Madge and Mac had rushed ahead to tell Delia that their guest was being brought home nearly frozen and drowned.

"*What* will it be next time?" groaned Delia. That was all she said, as she bustled around getting hot blankets and hot-water bottles ready for the doctor's use.

Dr. Carey worked over the poor boy some time before he brought him out of his unconscious condition, but he was in a burning fever and knew no one. Mac had hurried off to tell his father all about the accident, but the doctor sent after him and sent him to bed, much to the boy's disgust.

Poor Madge felt as if her speech had sent James to his accident, and she was in a most mournful state sobbing out her grief on "Momsie's" shoulder.

"Momsie, it was my horrid tongue which caused the trouble, I as much as told poor James I thought he stole Mac's essay. If he dies it will be my fault and I shall feel like a murderer, or murderess," and she wailed loudly, refusing all comfort.

"Rash judgment is a real sin, little girl," said mother, "but I do not think you need hold yourself responsible for the ice breaking though, that was purely an accident. Be very careful and never mention your suspicions to anyone."

James' illness turned out to be very serious, indeed. Captain Williston would not hear of his being moved to the hospital, as Dr. Carey suggested.

"Delia and Mike are both capital nurses, and Mac and I will help, too," said the captain.

The first time Mac entered the sick room, James raved wildly at him, begging him to forgive him and became so agitated that Dr. Carey forbade Mac to enter the room again.

When school opened again James was lying in the pretty guest room, out of danger, perfectly conscious, but too weak to move or talk. But, as his strength returned, so did the recollection of his sin, he could bear the burden of it no longer. One evening in the twilight visit of Captain Williston he sobbed out the whole pitiful story and begged him to help him.

Captain Williston, though pained at the disclosure was not entirely unprepared, for James had told a great deal of the story in his delirium.

"I am glad your good angel has induced you to confess your dishonesty, James," said the captain, gently. He felt very sorry for

the young sinner, though he hated his sin. "You have won half the battle."

"I know it, sir," replied the boy with a sigh of relief. "I feel better already, and now, sir, Mac must have the prize, and I will acknowledge what I have done, then I shall go away. I am not brave enough to go back to school, they will all hate and despise me."

"If you were a Catholic, James, I should call Father Smith into our counsel, he could help us, I know."

"Send for him, Captain," whispered the poor lad meekly. "He is so good to everyone, he will help me, I know, and I'm nothing at all, I have no religion. I like yours and Mac's, sir. I always hated Mac just because he had everything and I had nothing and everyone liked him and hated me. I was always mean to him, but he never seemed to mind, but went on being kind. Then I stole the prize from him, and he had me here for Christmas, and saved my life and all,—then when he knows the truth he will despise me, and I would die for him now if I could," ended the poor lad in a burst of honest emotion.

"No one need ever know of your sin, James, save us; don't worry now, my boy,

you are worn out, anyway. I promise you one thing, Mac will never despise you for confessing your sin like a man, and living it down honestly."

Through Father Smith's kindly agency, the prize money was restored, the lost essay found, and no one knew the secret of its disappearance save himself, Captain Williston, Professor Barton, and Miss Walcott.

The professor decided that the school must try again for the D. A. R. prize, and requested that the disagreeable incident be allowed to sink into oblivion, which decision the boys and girls heartily applauded.

When James was convalescent, he earnestly requested Father Smith to instruct him in the truths of the holy Catholic Church. It was now the latter part of January and in a few weeks he was to receive baptism; Captain Williston was to be his godfather.

During his illness his old grandmother had died, leaving the boy absolutely alone in the world.

The morning of February 5th, town and post were intensely excited by the newspaper reports of the fighting of February 4th, in Manila.

"I am afraid that means orders for us," said Captain Williston at breakfast table that morning.

That very afternoon James had a long talk with the captain, the result of which was, if the "51st" were ordered to the Philippines, James was to be allowed to enlist in "G," Captain Williston's company.

Mac looked rather glum when he learned of this; he envied his friend,— for he and James were real friends now,— his good fortune, but he did not even mention to his father the idea of his going, knowing he could never change him on this subject.

As they sat at the dinner table the evening of the sixth, the bell rang, Mac answered it, to find the colonel's orderly standing there, with a telegram.

"The commanding officer's compliments, and will Captain Williston read this," handing Mac the thin slip of yellow paper, which plays such an important part in the affairs of men.

After his message was delivered properly, the orderly's stiff official manner instantly changed. He was not much more than a boy himself, and his Irish blue eyes were shining with excitement.

"*It's orders for Manila!* Mac, me boy," he whispered confidentially.

And so it was. The "51st" was ordered to leave Randall barracks in five days' time for San Francisco, there to take the first available transport for Manila.

Poor Mac, he went around with white-set face helping his father get his own things in order, for the Captain was so busy with looking after his men, that he had no time to spare to see after his own outfit; but Mac knew exactly what was needed, and he and James with Delia's and Mike's help, soon had everything in readiness.

James was promptly enlisted, and that same afternoon he went down to the Rectory and was baptized; making his first Holy Communion the next morning, when Father Smith said a soldiers' Mass for the men going off to fight, when hundreds of them took advantage of this opportunity to go to confession and receive what to many poor gallant souls proved to be their "*Viaticum.*"

The day before the regiment was to leave, Captain Williston got a telegram from his brother-in-law, Major McLean, who was stationed at the Presidio at San Francisco, invit-

ing Mac to come out with the regiment and stay with them.

"Can you be ready by to-morrow, Mac," asked his father. "You just bet I can," was the quick response, and ready he was, when promptly at two o'clock the next day Flynn, the oldest bugler in the regiment, sounded the assembly.

The High School was down at the station in full force to give Mac and James a good send off, for Mac had been the most popular boy in the school.

The foot-ball eleven were inconsolable at his loss; while as for James, though he was not so well liked, yet every boy and girl was proud to think that one of their own number was to fight for the flag in the far-distant country.

So when "G" Company swung by, the trim looking young private in the rear rank received an ovation from his enthusiastic schoolmates, who also showered him with more substantial tokens of their regard, in the shape of cakes, preserves, fruit, etc.

The men of "G" Company lived well the whole long journey across the continent. As the first section of the long troop train pulled out, with the band playing a "Hot Time," and

the crowds cheering, the very last person both boys saw was Madge Stuart, waving her High School flag, smiling brightly at them while the tears poured down her cheeks.

She was sending off her own dear father and her best friend Mac.

For the present the women and children were to keep their quarters at the post; Captain Williston had obtained permission to keep his, likewise, with Delia and Mike in charge.

CHAPTER V.

THE eight days' journey across the continent was very wearisome, with only one little excitement to vary the monotony; when on pulling into a small Colorado town, the First Battalion found the whole place on fire, and so promptly did they go at it, that in half an hour the town was saved.

They had a two hours' wait there, so the good women of the town, to show their gratitude to the "boys," served them a fine supper at the town hall, and sent them off loaded down with all sorts of good things.

California seemed truly the land of sunshine to the northern men, straight from the snow and ice of Lake Champlain, as their train rolled down the fertile slopes of western California, one balmy February morning; flowers in bloom and fruit growing on the trees.

As the long troop trains were disembarked at the Oakland depot, a large and enthusiastic crowd marched with the "51st" down to the ferry which carried them across the bay to San Francisco.

Regiments for the Philippines were still a novelty, and were sure to be centers of interest.

A still larger crowd had gathered at the Oakland ferry slip to see the "regulars" come in. Colonel Randall had orders to march his regiment straight out to the Presidio; so the long blue columns of stalwart fellows swung up Market street to the stirring tune of "Garry Owen," while the crowd cheered and showered the soldiers with fruit of all kinds.

Mac, on his spirited pony, rode with the colonel at the head of the column, and was the envy of every boy who saw him. The camp of the "51st" was on a fine site, on a gentle slope of the hill, overlooking the Golden Gate.

By nightfall their camp was in perfect order, the long rows of company streets, the cook tents, where the soldier cooks were busily preparing supper, the colonel's big wall tent, in front of which floated the regimental colors, and the tents for the field and staff; all as if the "51st" had been in camp days, instead of hours.

The evening gun had boomed out from every post in the harbor, and the band had just finished "The Star Spangled Banner,"

and Mac had turned to go to the mess tent for supper (he had obtained permission to remain in camp with his father), when a boy's shrill piercing voice began to call out the evening papers.

"*Evenin' Chronicle! Bulletin! Evenin' papers! All about the famous Fifty-first.* Have one, young fellow?" to Mac.

"Yes, I will," he answered, amused at the boy's coolness. "Who are you?"

"Well I might ax yer the same, but I mind me manners fer onct, and tell ye me name wid out a cint's charge aither.

"Me name proper is William McGuire Brady of St. Patrick's parish and Father Howard's Boys' Night School; but they mostly call me 'Bawling Bill' of the Bush street gang, on account of me beootiful voice.

"Listen till I show you."

And the small gamin at once began a series of shrill ear-piercing yells and cries, which made Mac put his finger in his own suffering members, and begged his new found friend to desist.

"They'll run you into the guard tent, Bill, if you don't let up," he warned.

"Say, I've given ye me name straight,

what's yer own?" demanded Bill as he ceased his yelling.

"MacLean Williston. I belong to the 'famous 51st,' my father is captain of 'G' Company. That's why I am investing all my spare cash in your papers," said Mac scanning the sensational head lines, of the account describing the arrival of the regiment, and smiling at the numerous so-called photographs of the different officers. Mac grinned as he read beneath a cut of a stout, full-whiskered individual, "The gallant hero of San Juan, Captain Edward Williston."

"Poor dad," he murmured, "it looks like the old quartermaster sergeant; but won't he be mad, he hates this sort of thing."

"He's a stunner, ain't he?" commented Billy with genuine admiration. "You bet he is, Billy, but this picture don't half do him justice. Wait till you see him."

"My, sunthin smells good," said Billy, sniffing hungrily a certain appetizing odor of hash and coffee which began to steal out from the company kitchens.

"Supper," said Mac. "It's late to-night on account of getting everything settled." Suddenly Mac gazed at the sharp, rather pinched face of the ragged boy before him.

"Say, did you have your dinner to-day?" he asked.

"Nope, I didn't, too busy follerin' you's out here," was the brief independent answer.

But Mac knew better; the boy's white thin face, now that he looked carefully, showed that he was often too busy to get his dinner.

"Well, stay to supper with 'G' Company, Billy. I've a friend who will look after you and see that you get all the slum you can eat;" and Mac immediately led the way to Marvin's tent, where James took charge of him at supper, then gave the homeless lad an extra pair of blankets and a bed sack filled with sweet clean straw and told him he might bunk in his tent.

Billy was almost speechless with gratitude to his new found friends, but none of the three realized what far-reaching results would ensue from this careless boyish kindness.

Billy attached himself with dog-like affection to Mac and James and soon became a fixture in "G" Company, where he ran errands, blacked boots, and made himself generally useful, so that soon he was a great favorite with the men. He was the self-appointed guide and guardian of his two friends in their exploring rambles through the city,

for he knew every nook and corner of San Francisco, and had many friends from the "Dago" fruit dealers down on the busy wharves to Yun Wang, one of the Chinatown "bosses."

Under Billy's knowing guidance they accomplished more sight-seeing in one day than they ordinarily would have done in three or four.

Captain Williston was amused at the odd friendship; but as it kept Mac diverted and seemed to help him to forget the inevitable parting, that was so soon to come, he was glad of it.

He privately offered to give Billy some new clothes but the latter declined, saying he would wait until he had earned them.

When they did "Chinatown," Mr. Yun Wang gave James some cabalistic characters on his visiting card, a large affair of thin pink paper. James in his neat uniform seemed to impress everyone as the ranking member of the party of three, and when he would have protested and explained, Mac would not hear to it, and insisted upon gravely calling him Major.

Fearful and wonderful were the sights of Chinatown. When they went in a long under-

ground alley to see the famous old Chinese woman, who with her hundred pet cats lives in a den about ten by ten, Billy had the boys buy a few native delicacies for her, such as dried oysters, raw fish, and curious sweet beans.

"I always takes her something," he explained, "because she screams and makes awful faces at you if you don't, and you can't sleep nights for thinking of her."

They called on Father Howard, Billy's best friend, and learned all about his work amongst the street waifs of the big city. They left with the good priest a substantial proof of their interest, in the shape of a check from Captain Williston.

Father Howard, with Billy's permission, told the boys of his first introduction to his small parisnioner. He was called from his study one morning, bright and early, by a terrific peal of the bell. Hastening to the door, he found a youth, hat in hand and breathless from running.

"Say, Fader, will you gim me one of them swimmin' badges that the Cattic fellers has? We're goin in dis mornin, an the fellers is waitin round the corner; I'll pay fer 'em to-night when I'll sell my papers."

Billy got his scapulars, of course, on the promise that he would come back to night school; and now from a thorough little heathen, hardly knowing what God meant, save in sacrilege and profanity, he had become a good practical Catholic, having just made his first Communion and been confirmed.

He was, also, a member in good standing of the "White Cross League," whose members took a pledge not to drink nor use tobacco until they were twenty-one, also to do all in their power to promote purity.

Mac and James learned of Billy's brief history from Father Howard, all that the priest could tell them.

The boy was an orphan, with no relations that he knew of. He had lived with a dreadful old wretch of a woman, who claimed that his mother when she died had left the boy to her care; but as soon as Billy was old enough, he had taken literally to the streets, earning a precarious livelihood as best he could, fighting, swearing, smoking with the other little waifs of the slums, until Father Howard had gotten a hold on his warm, grateful little heart, and rescued the boy from a living death.

"He has great influence with his companions," Father Howard said, "and through

Billy's coaxing and bullying them into coming to me, I have most of the 'gang,' as he himself would express it, in my night school.'

Father Howard joined the boys one morning in their sight-seeing, taking them to a little old half forgotten chapel, which even Billy had never heard of, "The Mission Dolores." It was over a hundred years old, a relic of the Spanish occupation. It was built of adobe three feet thick, with tiny windows set up near the roof. No treacherous Indian arrows could surprise the kneeling worshipers, the lower walls, being loop-holed, so that the little church, in case of necessity, would be a safe place of refuge and defense.

A little cemetery inclosed in a high stone wall lay back of the church. Here were quaint and curious Indian and Spanish names, and on several tomb stones was rudely carved a hand, holding a drawn knife.

"That is the sign of the 'Vigilantes,'" explained Father Howard. "Those who lie here were killed by that dreadful secret organization known by that name. It was something on the plan of the southern Ku Klux Klan, but rapidly degenerated from a society for the enforcement of law and order, to a secret, murderous, organized band."

"It's like a dime novel," exclaimed Mac.

"Yes," laughed the priest, "but California was rather 'dime novely,' Mac, in the days of '49,' and though it is interesting to read and hear about those times, I infinitely prefer the comfortable present."

The "51st" had received its sailing orders for March 3d, and had been assigned to the big fleet transport, "Arizona," a former Atlantic liner. "No. 20," she was on the transport list.

The three boys made almost daily pilgrimages to her, watching with deepest interest the shining new coat of paint she was getting, the huge smoke stacks receiving a broad red, white, and blue stripes to show that the ship belonged to the army.

They had made several friends amongst the ship's crew, and never came aboard without a supply of tobacco or some other gifts for their friends, who allowed them all sorts of privileges.

The day the regiment got its orders, Billy screwed up his courage to go and ask permission of Captain Williston to go with "G" Company to Manila; but his services were politely, but firmly declined.

He received scant sympathy from Mac, to whom he went for consolation.

"You see, Bill, it's like this; dad would be awfully glad to have us with him, if we were only at Manila; but he won't let us go, knowing we are better off here."

"How about Jimmy?" James had long ago became Jimmy to his two friends.

"Oh, he's different, he's enlisted to try for his commission."

"Onct we was there he wouldn't mind though." Billy mused, he thought hard all that day and when night came, he confided a plan to Mac, under a promise of secrecy, which greatly excited that young man.

All the next day the two were seen in earnest excited confab, and finally James, after promising absolute secrecy, was confided in.

The 3d of March dawned cold, gray, and misty. The fog was so thick that everything appeared vague and indistinguishable through it, and so wet, as to be almost a rain.

The regiment was aboard by seven o'clock and a few moments later the big ship was steaming slowly down the bay, blowing her fog horn vigorously.

The last good-byes had been hurried ones. Captain Williston had wondered at the cheer-

fulness of Mac's farewell, he had watched for his boy among the group of friends and relatives on the wharf, who stood waving to him until the fog shut them out.

"I couldn't distinguish Mac," he thought, "but, no wonder in this mist; I only hope the lad saw me."

The "51st" had received "hurry orders." General Otis was in immediate need of troops, so the regiment was to be rushed straight through to Manila without the customary two or three days' stop at Honolulu.

This was a great disappointment to both officers and men, for this little break of three or four days, was a delightful one. It gave them a chance to mail letters to the dear home-people, to say nothing of the opportunity to visit this most fascinating of islands.

To two certain young conspirators this unusual program of the War Department gave unmitigated delight.

For the first five days, the weather continued cold, wet and disagreeable; but on the morning of the sixth the sun came up hot and blazing; the electric fans were put to work, white duck uniforms began to appear on deck, and officers and men began to realize that they

were experiencing their first touch of tropical weather.

Captain Williston, as new officer of the day, was mounting guard on the upper forward deck. He stood with folded arms while the band "sounded off," erect and military; when suddenly a disturbance from the hold caught his ear, a confused sound of laughter and exclamations,— then some voice called out,

"Three cheers for the Fifty-first Mascots," which were given with a vim; then springing up from the hatchway, followed by a crowd of pushing, laughing excited soldiers came Mac!

CHAPTER VI.

AS he caught sight of Mac's face, Captain Williston turned quite white, and for an instant there was a terrible silence; while the boy's voice, choked with emotion, broke as he sprang forward, crying with a deep sob:

"Oh! dear dad, please forgive me; I *could not* stand being left behind again."

"My dear lad," was all his father said, but Mac knew well enough from the tone of sorrow and care in the familiar voice how deeply grieved his father was.

Captain Williston knew it was a case for severe discipline; Mac had so grievously defied his authority, but it was such a white-faced, forlorn-looking young culprit who stood facing him, with a look of loving appeal in his eyes, that the Captain found his sternness melting rapidly away; so turning over the guard to the adjutant, he walked off to his cabin, bidding Mac follow him.

Just then another boyish figure appeared

above the hatchway for an instant, then ducked out of sight; but not before Captain Williston had recognized Billy's merry little Irish face.

"Are there any more of you, Mac?" the captain asked sarcastically, but with a suspicion of a smile which greatly encouraged Mac.

"No, sir," he replied meekly enough.

"Come, Billy, I want to hear from you too," called the Captain grimly; and the two lads were marched off to his cabin, from whence they emerged an hour later, looking thoroughly subdued and crest fallen, for Captain Williston said he had no doubt but that Colonel Kendall would return them to the States by the very next transport.

"I'll skip out if they try it," Billy announced decidedly, as the two boys discussed the situation in undisturbed privacy beneath the kindly shelter of one of the big lifeboats.

"Well, I sha'n't," answered Mac, knowing full well he could never screw up his courage to the point of again defying his father.

"The Colonel's compliments, and he wants you both at his cabin this instant," interrupted the orderly's voice at their elbows.

"What does he want?" inquired the two boys simultaneously, feeling a bit weak in the knees.

Mac, who had known Colonel Kendall ever since his babyhood, stood in very wholesome awe of him; but to poor Billy the Colonel represented all that was awful, so no wonder his voice trembled and his knees shook as he followed Mac aft.

Their interview with the Colonel was considerably briefer than with Captain Williston, but the same explanation was made to both. Billy had first suggested the plan of stowing themselves away, Mac had agreed to it, and after swearing James to secrecy, had made him help them. Their friends in the ship's crew had smuggled them aboard at the last moment to as comfortable a place of concealment as was possible in the dark, stifling hold.

Marvin, much against his will, had agreed to keep them supplied with food, and all had gone well until the intense heat of the tropics had forced the boys out of their hiding place.

It made little difference that they had to come out after only five days, as the transport was off the beaten track, and not likely to see a ship; also, as they were not to stop at Honolulu, there was no way in which

the stowaways could be sent back to the United States.

The Colonel let them finish their rather rambling tale, then said dryly:

"I've no doubt we shall find a homeward-bound transport ready to leave when we reach Manila. In the meantime, Mac, I appoint you my unofficial aid, and your young friend here may assist the mess steward, for it is against orders to allow any unauthorized persons about this ship."

And so it ended well enough for the present, but very uncertain as to the future, though Billy darkly hinted that he would never be taken back alive.

Life aboard the big troopship proved pleasant to both officers and men; the days slipped by monotonously enough and yet quickly too.

Though Mac shared his father's stateroom on the upper deck, and Billy a bunk down in the hold with the men, yet the two boys spent the greater part of the time together.

James was very busy "boning chevrons" these days, and then too, he was a little in disgrace, for both Captain Williston and Colonel Kendall felt as if he should never have connived at this plan of the two younger boys.

Reveille sounded at five o'clock; the men

bathed on the upper deck by battalions, then after breakfast, were drilled for an hour. Guard mounting was at eight, followed by an hour's band concert; after which all work was suspended for the day, for the tropical heat made any exertion impossible.

With evening the big ship seemed to awaken to new life and activity; the soldiers singing, playing, laughing and joking. Billy was in great demand and became very popular at these impromptu entertainments, for he could dance a cake walk and sing "rag-time" songs as well as the veriest "coon."

So the days slipped by pleasantly if monotonously. One morning they passed a group of low-lying rock islands in the midst of the vast Pacific. This was the one glimpse of land they had on the long journey.

Two or three days later, shoals of huge sharks, with their advance guard of pilot fish, swarmed around the ship. The soldiers amused themselves by fishing for the great monsters. Billy caught a huge six-footer, which he finally landed with the assistance of half the ship's crew.

The fish indicated land and the captain said he expected to sight Luzon on the twenty-sixth. It was a stifling hot night, too hot to

try to sleep in their berths, so the three boy friends were lying on the upper deck talking, when a light blazed up suddenly on the horizon, and at the same instant the man on the lookout sang out:

"Land ahoy!"

In a twinkling the quiet sleeping ship was all excitement, officers and men eagerly discussing this new station.

The lights seen were the signal fires of the insurgents, lighted on top of the hills surrounding Manila.

Early the next evening they steamed into the now famous Manila bay, being saluted by all the warships in the harbor, as they went by them, the transport flying every flag, her rigging manned by cheering soldiers, while the band played every patriotic air possible from the "Star Spangled Banner" to a "Hot Time." As the Arizona passed the huge English man-of-war, Powerful, her sailors manned the yards, cheered lustily, and when her ensign dipped in national salute, the English band struck up "The Star Spangled Banner," followed by "Yankee Doodle." The "51st" band acknowledged the compliment by responding with "God Save the Queen" and "Tommy Atkins."

OLYMPIA, U. S. N.

There was a very warm feeling at this time between the "Yankee" soldier and sailor and his English "cousin."

It was a gay and most inspiring scene; the great harbor with its waters of placid blue, the distant island hills, the warships of many nations with flags flying and bands playing, and over them all stood the Olympia and the American fleet, like faithful sentinels ever on guard.

The three boys were far too excited for much sleep that night and were up at dawn ready to disembark, eager to land in the city of their desire, Manila!

CHAPTER VII.

BY evening of the following day the "51st" was comfortably encamped on the famous seaside drive called the Luneta, where all Manila takes its airing after the intense heat of the day is over. Society goes in carriages, while the humbler portion of humanity strolls slowly along, enjoying the fresh, cool air from the bay, while the band plays patriotic and sentimental airs.

This far-famed drive and promenade is a thousand feet long; the roadway broad, clean and smooth, runs just above the beach, bounded on that side by the wall, on the other by green fields and clumps of bamboo.

The carriages must move from right to left, and during the Spanish occupation only the Archbishop and the Governor-General were allowed to drive in the opposite direction.

Colonel Kendall was informed that his regiment would move to the front in a few days, so no attempt was made at establishing a permanent camp.

Captain Williston gave young Marvin a week's pass, and turned over to his care Mac and Billy.

"Remember, boys, you must be in camp before eight every night. When you explore the city, keep out of the hot sun, boil your water, and carry it with you, and above all, all three of you keep together; then I shall feel as comfortable as I can about you."

The three boys explored the city as far as possible, but there were many restrictions, as the place was under martial law, and they found themselves stopped constantly by sentries who had orders not to allow this, that and the other; still they saw a good deal after all, and Mac got a number of interesting kodaks to send Madge.

They even met the great admiral one day, and had a few pleasant words with him. Mac told him how the Randall High School Cadets had celebrated the Manila bay victory with music, speeches, a parade, and fireworks.

The admiral seemed pleased and amused to hear this, so when Mac politely asked him if he would mind having his photograph taken, to adorn the walls of the High School at home, Admiral Dewey was as pleasant as possible,

and posed most good-naturedly while Mac snapped him off.

Billy was so overcome at having actually spoken to the hero of the day that for days he talked of nothing else, until a most exciting adventure of their own gave him something else to think of.

They had all three worked at their Spanish coming over on the transport, and Mac and Billy could understand it pretty well and chattered away at a great rate, Billy's being of the "dago" or street variety of Spanish, common to portions of San Francisco, while Mac's was decidedly Mexican, learned from his "greaser" friend in the company. Still they managed with it. James had the grammar far better than the younger boys, but he could not talk it as yet.

Every one in Manila spoke Spanish, even the "Meztizos," or half-castes, who have a queer lingo of their own, which Mac and Billy were picking up in their numerous journeyings to and fro.

Manila is built on and around the Pasig river, which is spanned with numerous bridges, over which flows the busy trade of the big city.

The ancient walled city of Manila proper

lies on the right bank of the river. With its medieval moats and ponderous drawbridges, its great stone gates, it was fascinatingly suggestive of battle and siege to our three young Americans.

Here were the magnificent cathedral, churches, convents, massive buildings of all sorts. There was one which possessed a peculiar yet horrible interest to the youthful explorers. It was a huge old Spanish barracks, built three centuries ago, with genuine dungeons, iron-barred, and in many of them the heavy iron chains and fetters, which had bound the unfortunate prisoners, were still to be seen lying on the floors of the cells.

Opposite old Manila lies the business portion of the city, its busy trade and traffic centering in the Puesta de España, which opens on the Escolta, a long, narrow street, the Broadway of Manila.

Then there is Ermita, a modern and attractive suburb, with broad, shaded avenues, along which are built beautiful villas, which had been quickly rented by the few American families who had followed the army to Manila.

Old Manila was, however, the centre of interest and fascination to the three American boys, and here one evening the fast deepening

twilight found them hurrying back to camp, for it was nearly eight o'clock.

They had turned up a narrow, dirty alley in the native portion of the town, thinking to make a short cut to the bridge, when they were arrested by sudden piercing cries for help, in a child's voice, which seemed to issue from an apparently deserted native hut to their left. As they rushed forward the body of a child was thrown violently out from the open doorway, there was one terrible cry, then silence.

"They have killed it," cried Mac, and he ran into the hut, followed closely by Billy, while James paused a moment to see if the child were really dead. As he lifted her — for he saw the child was a little girl of eight or ten — gently in his arms, a low moaning assured him that she lived.

The little face and arms were covered with bruises and from her forehead the blood ran, flowing from a deep cut.

Deftly and tenderly James bound up the wound with the "first aid" package with which every soldier is provided. As he did his work, he scanned the poor little pinched, starved face closely. Somehow it seemed familiar to him.

"It's Esmeralda, the little flower girl at the Hotel Oriente," he exclaimed. "I haven't seen her in her usual place in two or three days. We must get her to the hospital as quickly as possible. I'll call the boys."

This had taken much longer in the telling than in the doing, for it was not five minutes from the time Mac and Billy disappeared through the open door of the hut before James followed them, calling:

"Come on boys, she's not dead, but badly hurt, I'm afraid; hurry, we must get her to the hospital."

But to his astonishment there was no reply, and the boys semed to have disappeared.

It had grown quite dark by this time, so James struck a match, and fortunately found a rude candle, such as the natives use, on a small stand. Lighting this, he tried to open the only other door of the hut, but found it locked. He was thoroughly puzzled, for he had not heard a sound of any kind, nor seen any one.

Just then a queer sound of scuffling caught his ear, as of a body being dragged over bare boards. Hesitating no longer he threw his whole weight against the locked door, which burst open, and James found himself con-

fronted by a huge coal-black Negrite woman of a peculiarly wild, fierce aspect.

She was fully six feet tall, with snow-white hair and small, red, cruel eyes, which gleamed with Satanic rage. She wore the usual dress of the native women of the lowest class, but strangely out of place with the poor dress, was a peculiar barbaric necklace of glittering white teeth, from which was suspended a large golden serpent, encrusted with diamonds.

James' quick observation had taken in the details in one glance; he realized instantly the full gravity of the situation. The boys had been entrapped into some deadly peril, he knew, and he must act promptly.

Drawing his pistol quickly he covered the old witch with it, then said sternly:

"Release those boys at once, or I call the patrol."

The old hag did not understand a word of English, but she knew perfectly what the young soldier meant. She had no idea he was alone; in fact she would never have dared to touch the other bovs had she not thought them alone and unprotected. She had a wholesome awe of the American uniform, and at the sight of the slight young figure in the hated "khaki," the old hag gave way with a

savage snarl. She allowed James to push past her, where, lying on the floor, tightly bound and gagged, he found Mac and Billy.

Releasing them from their decidedly uncomfortable position, James turned to take the old negress a prisoner, but she had taken advantage of his back being turned to her to step noiselessly out of the low, open window and had disappeared. James was dreadfully mortified over this unforeseen mischance.

"Well, come on, you two, and tell me how on earth you managed to get yourselves into this scrape, while we carry the child to the hospital."

"It's that little girl who sells flowers at the Hotel Oriente, Esmeralda they call her." Mac nodded; he had several kodaks of the picturesque child.

James took the child in his arms, still carrying his pistol, however, for fear of a sudden attack, and all three hurried in the direction of the First Reserve hospital, while Mac and Billy related what had befallen them.

They nad rushed headlong into what they thought was an empty room, and on trying the door, which James had broken open, they had felt themselves seized and drawn into the back room before they could make a single

outcry. Then they had been quickly bound and gagged by the old woman and her accomplice, a wiry little "Mestizo," who had flown at the first sound of James' voice calling to his companions.

Mac and Billy had made agonizing efforts to call for help, but had not been able. It was their struggles to free themselves which James' quick ears had caught, which enabled him to come to their rescue.

They turned the little girl over to the sweet-faced, white-capped nurse at the hospital, then all three went over to the tent of the hospital guard, and reported their strange adventure to the young Second Lieutenant in command.

"Well, boys, you have had a narrow escape," said the young officer. "I hope it will be a lesson to you to keep out of the slums at dark. Manila is none too safe in broad daylight; but at night anything is liable to happen, I know, for I've been here almost a year now." And the Lieutenant sighed; he was only a boy himself, and a homesick one at that.

"Come now, I'm going to send a file of the guard to see you safely into camp, and you, my man," to James who stood stiffly at attention, "report to me immediately after

reveille to-morrow morning. I want you to show me this witch's den; for I strongly suspect you have unearthed the 'Witch of Tondo,' Aguinaldo's prophetess, soothsayer and spy. If so she will be a very valuable capture."

"A witch is it," said Billy, the irrepressible. "Do they eat yer, sar?"

The Lieutenant nodded gravely. "They say Tuliga does, and that necklace of teeth you describe is a dreadful souvenir of her victims."

Billy shuddered, his usually merry face was quite sober and white.

"I'll be dramin of her," and he crossed himself reverently.

Here their escort reported, and soon the boys were safely in camp, where fortunately their absence had not been discovered. They decided not to speak of their night's adventure until the old witch was unearthed.

"It would only worry dad, and do no good," said Mac, "besides, now that we are here, we shall have to learn to take care of ourselves."

That night there was quite a fire in the native portion of the city, one whole street or alley being totally destroyed.

The next morning, when James piloted the young officer of the guard to the scene of the last night's adventure, a mass of blackened ruins was all that met his astonished gaze.

But the young officer only smiled, and remarked nonchalantly, "I'm not surprised; I rather expected it when I heard the fire alarm last night. The birds have flown this time."

CHAPTER VIII.

MARVIN'S pass expired the next morning and he marched on guard, so was unable to accompany Mac and Billy on their visit to the hospital, where they went the very first thing, to inquire for the small patient whom they had so strangely rescued.

They found the little girl lying in a cot in the nurses' ward; she was quite sensible, but very weak, too weak to do more than smile feebly and murmur a pathetic little "gracios."

She looked like a broken tropical flower herself, the poor little flower-seller of the "Oriente," her dark eyes gleaming out of a small dusky face, encircled with a ring of heavy black curls.

The child had been terribly excited on coming to herself in the strange scenes of the hospital; so to calm her excitement the nurse told her of her timely rescue from the clutches of old Tuliga. This is how she understood who the two young Americans were.

It was several days before the boys and the kindly nurse together pieced out the child's sad story, which some loyal wealthy Filipino refugees confirmed.

Her father, Don Alvarez Camilio, was a wealthy Spanish planter, who owned an immense estate south of Manila, in the very center of the Province of Cante, a hot-bed of rebellion. He had been taken prisoner in the early part of the insurrection, his house burned to the ground, crops, animals, everything stolen and destroyed.

Don Camilio had lived very much alone since the death of his wife, Esmé's mother, who had died before the little girl was old enough to remember her.

The child had seen her father struck down that awful night when the insurgents had attacked the plantation. He had called to her to run, which she had done, hiding in the thick undergrowth until late the next day, when Tuliga, the wife of the big black who managed the native workmen, found her, and carried her to Manila, bidding the frightened child keep a silent tongue as to what she had seen that awful night, and also as to who she was. On no account was she to tell any one that she was the daughter of the wealthy

Spaniard Don Camilio. Tuliga impressed this upon her with dreadful threats. She would be killed, or she would never see her father again.

As time wore on, the money and valuables Tuliga had stolen the night the plantation was invaded, gave out, spent in riotous dissipation. It was then she had sent the child out to sell flowers, beating her cruelly when she did not bring back plenty of money. The beatings did not occur often after the American occupation, for Esmeralda's pretty face and winning grace of manner brought her plenty of customers.

On that particular day the child had felt so sick that she had slept most of the day, so that when she returned to the wretched hut, which sheltered her cruel tyrant and her poor little self, she had only ten cents, Mexican, to show for the day's work.

Tuliga had fallen upon the child with unusual fury, for she wanted money particularly; a Mestizo youth had arrived, bringing a message from her husband, who was serving under Aguinaldo, saying she must send him money. The woman had saved up quite a sum for just this occasion, but if the child had only done her duty, as she said, there would

have been several dollars more to swell the fund.

The half-breed youth had suggested that Tuliga dispose of the heavy gold necklace she wore, but the woman scowled fiercely, and muttered something about it's being a charm of life and death.

The youth shuddered. He had heard of Tuliga's witch necklace, which if laid with evil intention upon a perfectly well person, would cause a sudden and fatal illness. It could also restore to health the dying, if the witch was so disposed.

No wonder that the owner of this marvel enjoyed the reputation of a seer and prophetess among the ignorant, superstitious natives. It was even whispered that Aguinaldo himself owed his charmed life, for it was well known that their chief was bullet-proof, to the little amulet which Tuliga had.

Mac decided that his father's help was necessary, so told him the whole story of their adventure.

Captain Williston was very much interested in the boy's protégée, and the child fell in love with the tall, grave man who never came to see her without some little gift to amuse and please her.

The Captain went with the Spanish Jesuit, the priest in charge of the American chapel, to tell the Archbishop of Manila about the orphaned child. No one believed it possible that her father could still be alive.

The Archbishop was deeply interested and promised to do all in his power for the little girl.

He was greatly pleased when he learned that the Willistons were Catholics, and questioned the Captain closely upon many points.

"Were there Catholics among the soldiers?"

"Six hundred, Your Grace," was the quiet reply, "in my own regiment."

"Is it possible?" was the amazed answer. Then followed a long conversation, in which the Captain explained many things. His own Spanish was very halting; he could read the language, but much conversation was beyond him, and he had to depend upon the kind offices of Father Sanchey.

The interview was most pleasant and satisfactory in every way, and Captain Williston knew that in the Archbishop, Esmé had gained a kind and powerful friend.

It was decided that she was to go to the Convent in old Manila, where the good nuns

would give her every care, until her people in Spain could be communicated with.

About ten days after the arrival of the regiment, Colonel Kendall received orders to march out to "El Deposito," or the water works from which the city of Manila and its suburbs drew its entire water supply.

Manila was encircled by a line of strong intrenchments, eighteen miles in length, and it was only this strong guard on outpost duty which made Manila itself safe and kept the native sympathizers from an uprising inside of the city walls.

The "water-works" was the most important position on the line, and subject to almost nightly attacks from the insurgents.

The water supply was kept in huge stone basins, hollowed out of the natural rock. It was pumped into these reservoirs from the pumping station some few miles out to the front, on the Mariquina river.

The night before they were to march out to their place on the line, Colonel Kendall sent his orderly for Mac.

"See here, young man," he asked, "what is all this I hear about you rescuing fair Spanish maidens and capturing Filipino witches? Come, make a report, sir."

So Mac told his tale. "You see Marvin did the rescue act, Colonel, and as to capturing, I think the Filipino witch did the most of that, sir," and Mac grinned.

"Well, don't have any more such adventures, that's all. Remember, I have appointed you my volunteer aid; you are on duty now, so report to Mr. Banks, the Quartermaster, and choose a mount. I shall often want you to carry messages for me."

Mac thanked the Colonel warmly and then started off at once to find Mr. Banks and the horses.

The horses in Luzon are really small-sized ponies, not much larger than a big St. Bernard, but gentle, patient, strong little beasts.

Mac chose a pretty sorrel, with a white face, whom he named Tagal.

The march out to El Deposito next day was a severe test for the raw recruits in the "51st," of whom there were several hundred.

It was frightfully hot and the water supply very scanty, but the "rookies" were on their mettle. They meant to show the old soldiers what pluck could do; so when the battalions were given their place in the line that night, not a man was absent or missing, and the Red Cross ambulances, which traveled

slowly in the rear of each battalion to pick up the men worn out and exhausted, came in empty of patients.

The Colonel was immensely delighted and complimented the company commanders highly.

"We needn't fear," he said, "our recruits are all right. Men that will march like *that* will fight when the time comes."

And the Colonel's prophecy came true before many weeks had passed.

An aide-de-camp of General Otis rode with the Colonel, and when the regiment reached its destination, gave them their proper position on the "line."

The "51st" had two miles of trenches to guard — rather a thin line to keep out the sneaking, treacherous Filipino, but it was all that could be spared.

Off to their left the Colorado's pickets joined theirs, while off to the right some artillery had guns mounted. The company streets of the "51st" occupied a ridge which wound in and out irregularly; about a hundred yards to the front was a line of intrenchments, most skillfully laid out, and made by the insurgents, who, as usual, had abandoned

them at the first yell of the charging Americans.

The outposts of the "51st" occupied these trenches; and the pickets had no easy time trying to keep out of bullet-reach of the lurking enemy, and see that none of their spies got through the American line.

Hardly a night but the pickets would capture a dozen or so of pretended "Amigos" smuggling information, ammunition and, especially rice, out of the city.

Mac, on Tagal, had personally captured half a dozen stalwart natives, to the envy of Billy, to say nothing of Marvin, who felt that his uniform should entitle him to rank his two companions, even in the capture of the wily native.

Some ten days after they had been on this outpost duty, the "51st" had their first taste of being under fire in the Philippines.

It was an intensely hot, dark night; the rain had been coming down in torrents all day — such a down-pour that no one had ventured forth from the shelter of the dripping tents, save those on duty.

Tired out, Mac had turned in early in the evening and fallen asleep at once. The last sounds he had heard was the rain beating

against his tent, and the half-hour calls of the sentries that "all was well." He had no idea how long he had slept, when suddenly he was awakened by, he knew not what, a faint, muffled call it seemed to him, but as nothing followed, he thought it must have been a dream. Settling sleepily back on his pillow he thought:

"I'll call out to Number Six when he passes next time, and ask him if he heard anything."

Sentry Number Six was on a beat which led directly to the rear of Mac's tent.

Suddenly, as he lay there, a crackling in the underbrush near by caught his ear. Now he listened with every nerve strained to catch the slightest sound.

"I guess it's pigs," said the boy nervously. Those half-wild animals had been the cause of several false alarms in camp, and Mac determined not to make himself a laughing stock by sounding another one.

Where was Number Six? He waited. Then the conviction flashed over him that Number Six was not walking his post; *something had happened to him!*

For an instant the boy hesitated. He would awaken his father and let him investigate, but as he started over to Captain Williston's tent,

he heard the unmistakable "click" of a rifle; then all doubts vanished. Discharging his pistol rapidly, he shouted out his warning, at the top of his voice, arousing every man in the battalion and bringing in the pickets on a run.

As they came charging along, the old abandoned Spanish trench, which had been the post of luckless Number Six, poured forth a terrific volley, which was the signal for similar ones all down the "line."

The insurgents were attempting a night attack. It was so dark that neither side could see a thing, save as the flash of the rifles gave a momentary glimpse of the grim, excited faces of the Americans and the top of Filipinos' hats.

The Colonel came rushing up, buckling on his sword as he ran. Mac followed him, saying in a most military, if somewhat excited manner: "I report for duty, sir." He was determined the Colonel should not forget his position as volunteer aid.

"Good, is that you, Mac? I can't see my own hand in this confounded darkness," gasped the Colonel. "Run down to the third battalion, tell Captain Wayne to flank these

fellows on our left, then if you see your way clear, continue on to the Colorados and warn them that the enemy may possibly have gotten to their rear through our line here."

"Load your pistol," he called out as Mac vanished into the blackness. Immensely proud of his mission, Mac flew over the ground, now splashing into some deep new water hole, made by the day's rain, now tripping against some unseen obstacle and coming down with a thump; presently he heard the third battalion coming on a run. Their own portion of the line had not been attacked.

Shouting Captain Wayne's name, he stopped that officer long enough to deliver the Colonel's order, then dashed on.

Mac had not seen his father to speak to him before leaving camp, for Captain Williston was with his battalion in the trenches before even the Colonel reached the scene of action.

A group of tall palms marked the entrance to the camp of the Colorado volunteers, who were in a great state of excitement. Mac could hear them shouting and running, trying to discover what was happening over on the "51st" line.

As he reached the first of the tall palms. panting and breathless, a bare foot was suddenly stretched out to trip him, and down he went, firing his pistol as he fell. His shot was followed by a groan, so Mac knew he had hit his unknown assailant, but he could not see him.

Calling loudly for help, he felt around in the long grass until his hand came in contact with his wounded enemy, who immediately began protesting that he was an "Amigo."

Mac clutched him tightly and held on to his captive until the Sergeant of the guard, with several officers, came running up with a lantern.

Mac delivered Colonel Kendall's message, then followed his prisoner to the field hospital tent, where he was immensely relieved to find that he had not wounded him seriously, the Filipino being more scared than hurt.

In the brighter light of the hospital, as Mac looked at his prisoner, the man's face seemed familiar; that deep, jagged, fresh scar on the man's forehead, he had surely seen before. The Filipino grinned cheerfully at him; seemingly he bore no malice.

L. of C.

"He looks as if he knew me, too," said Mac to himself, still puzzled. Just as he turned to leave the tent, the Filipino nodded his head and whispered, "Tuliga, Manila."

Then Mac knew he was the Tondo witch's accomplice, and might prove to be a very important capture.

Mac got back to the regiment just in time to seize a rifle and fire a parting shot at the enemy, who were retreating on a run, as the two flanking battalions came charging at them with the terrible Americano yell, which they feared nearly as much as their bullets.

After the fight the sentry on Number Six was found dead with a knife through his heart. The enemy had crept upon the poor lad and killed him before he could know what had struck him.

He was only a "rookie" was Number Six but many an old soldier's eye was moist as he gazed on the boy's young face, stilled in death; and the thought came to them that this boy was only the *first* to die — many more would lie beside that boy before the campaign was over.

They found a Catholic Chaplain in one of the volunteer regiments, who came over the next day and buried the boy.

MANY OF THE CATHOLIC SOLDIERS ATTENDED THIS CHURCH IN MANILA.

When the next Sunday our three boys went over to the volunteer camp to Mass, it seemed as if half the congregation wore a "51" on their campaign hats, whilst numbers of them received Holy Communion.

The day after the fight Mac received an official-looking document from regimental headquarters. It contained an official note of thanks from Colonel Kendall for his services of the night before and it was addressed to "MacLean Williston, Volunteer Aide."

Captain Williston smiled rather sadly at his boy's pride and enthusiasm. The Captain himself was delighted with Mac's achievements, but he remarked ruefully:

"Mac, Mac, I am afraid I shall never get you safely back home, now that you have 'tasted blood.'"

And as it proved this was the last that Mac and Billy heard of being sent home on the "next transport."

CHAPTER IX.

A FEW days after the unsuccessful night-attack of the insurgents against that portion of the "lines" held by the "51st," Mac was the proud recipient of an official document from Division Headquarters, signed by General Lawton himself, confirming his appointment as a Volunteer Aide on Colonel Kendall's staff.

The Colonel had been assigned a brigade, and was now in command of the line, eighteen miles in length, which surrounded Manila, reaching from San Pedro Mecatie to Caloocan.

Mac carried the order to "G" Company to show James and Billy, who were as delighted as he himself was. Billy insisted upon "coming to attention" every time Mac addressed him, and answering "Yes, sor," or "Yes, Lieutenant," until Mac threatened to punch his head for him.

"Say, can you two fellows ride into Manila

this morning? I am to be measured for a new khaki outfit," Mac asked the two.

"Wid shoulder straps?" asked Billy, the irrepressible.

"Not yet, kid, but I mean to *earn* them before this campaign is over," was the earnest reply.

"We are going to have some real work to do before long, besides this catching of rice and pig-stealing natives. But I am to wear a '51' on my campaign hat and a 'V. A.' on my blouse collar."

James and Billy easily obtained the required permission, and the battalion quartermaster-sergeant good-naturedly furnished each boy a mount.

They set off in high spirits, planning a visit to their little protégée at the hospital after the shopping was done.

As they rode off Captain Williston called to them to return early, they must not, on any account, be between the "lines" after dusk.

They rode first to José Roque, the little tailor on the Calle Anloaque, No. 4, who had done quite a good deal of work for the officers in the "51st." Mac was anxious to appear in uniform on his birthday, which was the ensuing Thursday, June 8th; so he made the ob-

sequious Filipino promise to have his uniform at the camp by nine o'clock, Thursday.

José protested volubly that it was very little time, and that he was overrun with work, and all Americanos were alike, each must have his work "*at once, at once.*"

But Mac knew his man, so he only shrugged his shoulders, and answered indifferently. "Well, no doubt, Alejandro would undertake to make the suit for Thursday."

But here José's remarks grew so noisy that the boys, laughing, beat a hurried retreat, leaving José still shrilly protesting that, rather than have that pig of an Alejandro spoil good cloth — for every one knew he was no tailor, but a maker of *pajamas;* he, José, would work day and night, and the young Señor should have his clothes Thursday without fail.

After this first and most important part of the day's shopping was over, the boys spent a pleasant hour in Ramona's little shop on the Escolta.

Ramona was a pretty Filipino girl of about twenty, with a keen sense of business. She kept native embroideries and trinkets for sale, for which she asked just as much as she was able to get from each customer.

Here Billy was in his element; Ramona talked Mestizo and Billy plain American street slang, but they understood each other and got along remarkably well.

Mac bought some drawn work for Mrs. Stuart, a fan for Madge, and some other trinkets for the children.

James purchased a handsome piece of native embroidery for Miss Walcott.

This shopping was hungry work, so they decided to postpone their visit to Esmé until after "tiffin" (luncheon), which they had at a gorgeous-looking restaurant near "The Bridge of Spain," called, by its native proprietor, "Old Glory." A bill of fare before the open concha windows announced,

Strictly AMERICANO Cookin
By *Greatest* EPICURES of the ARCHIPELAGO,
Assisted by Chefs from NU ENGLAND STATES
Frankfort sawsage,
Sower kraut,
BEANS
PIES
All other AMERICANO *dishes!*

The boys were hungry, and went through the bill of fare thoroughly and earnestly; but when they had finished, Billy wiped his mouth with a very dubious-looking napkin, and hummed softly:

"Same old thing, same old thing,
With a roast or stew or broil;
A good bit of garlic and more of olive oil."

Mac laughed, "I like a touch of garlic myself, in salad dressing, but I should be awfully sick of it, if we flavored everything with it, *a la Spanish.*"

"I can eat anything when I am hungry," remarked James, "but give me good American bacon and hard bread, instead of Spanish garlic and oil."

After lunch the three paid their visit to Esmeralda, whom they found up and dressed. She greeted them warmly, and was much interested in hearing of Mac's adventure with the Mestizo boy. "I do not remember him on the plantation at home," she said, "but he came often to Tuliga's house, here in the city. I am sure he knows something of my dearest father."

"*Make* him tell, Senor Mac," the child insisted, with a flash of her black eyes.

"We will, Esmé," replied the boy. "Between the three of us we will get your father back. Nurse tells me you are to be removed to the Convent to-morrow, where the good sisters are to care for you. You must study hard, to make up for lost time."

"Indeed I will, Señor; I am very ignorant for one of my years. I hope you will come and see me at the Convent. Will they let boys in?" she asked anxiously.

"Sure," answered Billy, promptly, "American boys. If they don't, we'll get Father Vicente to go with us, he's almost as good as an American priest."

The boys took leave of the little girl, promising to come to the Convent as soon as possible. She seemed to cling to them, as if, somehow, they were a visible link between herself and her absent father.

When the boys returned to camp, they found everyone in a subdued state of excitement over a rumor that there was to be an active movement south, in which the "51st" would take part; but no orders came. Officers and men lay down with their clothes on, expecting the order might come any moment, but nothing was heard of it during the night, nor the following day, nor the next: so the regiment settled down once more to the tiresome outpost duty of preventing the insurgents from passing the "lines," either in or out of Manila.

The rainy season was beginning, and picket duty in the trenches during a tropical storm was no light task; the men in the trenches

walked post up to their waists in water. The footpath over which Captain Williston had ridden the day previous, to inspect his battalion, was now submerged, and formed part of a small lake in which the Chinese fishermen were casting their nets, and bringing out a curious mud fish.

Mac's uniform reached him safely on his birthday, and his father gave him a handsome sword and pistol. The Quartermaster sent him a brand new saddle and bridle for "Tagal."

After breakfast the Colonel's orderly rode up and, saluting gravely, delivered his message. "The Colonel's compliments, and would Mr. Williston report at once." It was a very swell-looking young officer who obeyed the summons. "Well done, Mac," called the Colonel, as the boy dashed up to the Headquarters tent, and he looked approvingly at the well set-up, trim young figure in the neat-fitting khaki uniform.

"No general on the 'line' has a smarter aide than I, nor one that rides any better, if as well. You must go in the cavalry, boy."

Mac blushed with pleasure, for the Colonel was a grim old soldier, not given to praise of his subalterns.

"Here, take this telegram from General Otis, along the 'line,' to the commanding officer of each battalion; and, if you are sure you can keep a still tongue, you may read the message you carry."

"Yes, sir," Mac replied, with the proper military salute, as he started off at once on his errand.

"Remember, boy, I don't take you into any fighting; you will remain in camp when the command goes out to-morrow."

A sudden lump came into the boy's throat; he was only a play soldier, after all; when there was to be actual fighting he was to be left behind.

No need to read the yellow slip; the order came from Corps Headquarters. Colonel Kendall had already told him substantially its contents.

Mac rode soberly down the long "line," handing over the order to each battalion commander in turn — reaching his father last.

"Do you know the contents, Mac?" asked Captain Williston.

"Yes, sir; and the Colonel has told me I am not to go."

"Thank God," was the Captain's involuntary prayer.

"But I am going to ask your consent to my going, dear dad," continued the boy, earnestly.

"I have only *one* son, Mac," was his father's reply.

"And I have only *one* father. Let us stay together, dad. I know I am only a boy, sir, but I have been doing a man's work, and, father, it is galling now to be treated as a child."

This was true, and the Captain could not gainsay it.

The brown eyes met his with the strength and vigor of young manhood; the face, a little pale with suppressed emotion, was full of a proud determination.

For a moment there was a silence, then the grayhaired officer laid his hand on the stripling's shoulder, and said slowly and solemnly: "You may go, Mac, and God have you in His holy keeping."

It was like a benediction, and the young soldier replied in his heart with a fervent "Amen," though aloud, all he said was:

"Thank you, awfully, dad, dear; you're a brick."

The Colonel gave in at once, when he learned that Captain Williston was willing.

"I should have felt the same at your age, youngster, but I am older now and have more sense," was all he said.

Mac hesitated a moment before he rode off. "What is it, boy? Out with it."

"Sir, may the Catholic men have a chance to go to confession to-night?"

The Colonel thought a moment. "They used to do it in the Civil War," he said to himself, then: "Yes; if you do not notify them until after taps; so get your priest, and have him ready between tattoo and ten o'clock, for by that time the order will be given to the companies, and there will be no need of secrecy."

Mac thanked Colonel Kendall warmly, then flew along the trenches until he reached the Wyoming Volunteers. Their Chaplain, Father Reynolds, was a fine man, who not only looked carefully after his own men, but did all he could for the Catholics in the whole brigade, celebrating Mass and hearing confessions for the different regiments in turn.

When Mac drew Tagal up before the Chaplain's tent, he found him conversing with a tall, slight young priest, very neat and trim, indeed; evidently just landed. A transport had arrived only the day before. He proved

to be Father Dean, who had come out with the "30th" Regulars.

On telling his errand, both priests promised to come, and both commended the boy for his thoughtfulness. Father Reynolds pressed him to stay to "tiffin," but Mac declined. He had one more errand to accomplish before night-fall, and that was a visit to the half-breed youth in the field hospital of the Colorado Volunteers. He agreed with Esmé, that the young Mestizo could give them some information of Don Camilio, if he could be made to speak.

Obtaining permission from the junior surgeon to visit his captive of the night attack, Mac entered the hot, dusty tent, to find the poor fellow feverishly tossing from side to side, moaning in semi-delirium.

It was not the first sick man Mac had helped nurse, so quickly taking off his coat, he asked the soldier attendant to bring him cold water, and then bathed and fanned the poor youth into comparative comfort. He gave him cold lemonade to sip, a delicacy he sent out to purchase, for the hospital had no ice, save for the desperately sick.

As he worked over the poor fellow, Mac was rewarded by the big black eyes losing

their stare of delirium. Presently the boy smiled, and said feebly: "Mucha buenos, Americano."

"Do you know me?" Mac asked. The boy nodded feebly.

"Say, I'm awfully sorry I hurt you," said Mac, impulsively. The young Mestizo smiled and murmured: "I meant to kill *you*, it is nothing, Señor."

"Well, I'm sorry, just the same," said Mac decidedly; "and now I have come to ask you to tell me where Don Camilio is, Esmeralda's father?"

They had been carrying on the conversation in Spanish, but at this question the patient pretended he could not understand.

But Mac was patient. "Tell me where he is. If you do I will look after you, when you are well; you need not go and fight any more."

The youth shrugged his shoulders, and made a significant gesture, drawing his finger quickly across his throat. "I am tired of the starving and fighting, Señor, and the women and children say you Americanos are good and kind, but if I, José Pantoja, turn 'Amigo,' Aguinaldo will order me killed, so ——" again the same significant gesture.

"But," replied Mac, "Aguinaldo is far to the north; he is nowhere near Manila."

The boy shook his head. "He is everywhere. He has the *power* from Tuliga." He went on in a low, mysterious whisper: "You will *never* kill him, no bullet can, he wears a charm which the 'Witch of Tondo' gave him."

"Nonsense, José, just wait until he bucks up against a Krag-Jorgenson," said Mac, forgetting his Spanish for the moment.

"I have seen it, myself, young Senor. Aguinaldo standing up, straight and tall, and ten, *twenty*, soldiers of the Filipino army shoot at him, and not one of the bullets can touch him."

Mac laughed impatiently, there was no arguing with superstition such as this.

"So I must tell poor little Esmé that José will not help her to release her father from his cruel imprisonment. You who were born and grew up on the hacienda Camilio, you who have had nothing but kindness from Don Camilio himself, you will leave him to starve and die in an insurgent prison, while his child breaks her heart."

Mac grew eloquent in his appeal to the youth's better nature, for the vision of Esmé's sorrowful little face was before him.

José stirred uneasily. He remembered well the comfort and peace which had reigned in the hacienda, before Aguinaldo's agents had begun their secret work amongst the simple and contented natives. Don Camilio had been a kind and indulgent master, and as for the little Esmeralda, they had all loved the child for her likeness to the sweet young mother, whom every man, woman, and child on the place had adored.

As these tender recollections revived in José's heart, he stirred uneasily, and looked half angry and half sullen.

Suddenly he whispered quickly, looking around suspiciously, as if afraid of being overheard: "To the south, beyond the bridge where Tuliga dwells, look for the master." It was all very vague, but Mac was fain to be content, for not another word would José utter.

Mac bid him a cheerful good-bye, and rode back to camp. It was a strange, solemn scene that the tropical moon shone down upon that night. Long rows of soldiers in full field equipment, kneeling patiently near the two

confessionals, improvised from two shelter tents, "dog tents" the men called them, in derision, for they were not fit to shelter human beings.

There was no time to say Mass, nor give the men Holy Communion, for when reveille sounded at half-past three, there were still a few penitents to be hurriedly absolved.

At five o'clock promptly the bugles sounded the "assembly," and in dead silence the long line of blue was formed, and at a wave of the Colonel's sabre, broke into columns, and swung off down the road to Manila, the rendezvous for the troops being "The Bridge of Spain."

CHAPTER X.

IT was frightfully hot that June morning, the mercury stood at 98 in the shade, when it was barely four o'clock.

Every officer and man carried his own ration and equipment, which consisted of two hundred rounds of ammunition for each man, and a half a shelter tent; two men bunking together.

Later on in the campaign, Chinese coolies were provided to carry the rations and tentage for the soldiers.

Canteens were filled to the brim with boiled water as the assembly sounded, and each company officer cautioned his men not to waste one drop of the precious fluid, as all the ponds and streams near the coast were brackish and utterly undrinkable.

A regiment of volunteers had taken the place on the "line," which the "51st" had been guarding.

Colonel Kendall, with the brigade surgeon, his adjutant, and quartermaster, rode at the head of the command.

Captain Williston, at the head of his battalion, rode a little to their rear, and at his side Mac on Tagal.

James had been made a lance corporal only the night before, and he was marching along, very proud, indeed, of his one thin white stripe, which, truth to tell, he had made of a piece of white bandaging he had gotten from a hospital corps man; there being no time to find anything better.

Billy would have been left behind, save that the teamster who drove the Red Cross ambulance gave him a lift. He knew how quick and handy the boy was, and there would not be much danger of his being hurt if he kept to the rear with the hospital corps.

No one, not even the Colonel, knew the exact location for which they were headed. Several expeditions had had their object defeated, by the enemy in some way getting wind of the plan of campaign, so this time no one, save the commanders themselves, knew the object and destination of this expedition.

The "51st" were the first to reach the rendezvous named in the order, "The Bridge of Spain;" but the other regiments came up rapidly, and General Lawton, on his big white

horse, dashed up to assume command of his division.

Well to the front he rode, accompanied by his staff officers. Tall, slender, and well-built, he was every inch a soldier. Brave, and absolutely fearless under fire, he had the faculty of inspiring those under him with his own courage and fearlessness.

The heat had become overpowering, and as the troops marched, a long, silent procession, first one blue-shirted figure, and then another, and another, dropped from the ranks. Already the surgeons were busy, and yet not a bullet had been fired.

Generals Wheaton and Ovenshine were in command of the two brigades, which consisted of regular infantry, Nevada cavalry, artillery, and the Washington volunteers.

The "51st" was in Wheaton's Brigade, and before long word came that they were to march south to Paranaque, clearing the country in Cavité province of rebels, who were reported to be strongly entrenched at the Zapota bridge, near Imus. As Mac heard Colonel Kendall inform his father of their destination, suddenly José's words flashed into his mind. "To the *south*, beyond the bridge, where Tuliga dwells, look for the mas-

ter." Certainly they were marching due south, and before night would be beyond the bridge. Mac was intensely excited at the thought of his surmise proving true. He rode back to acquaint Marvin of his hopes, whereupon James, too, became excited. As they talked the man in ranks next to James wavered, groaned, and fell heavily to the ground; but no one of the line paused an instant to help. A hospital man from the rear rushed up, and soon a litter was carrying the unfortunate man off.

"It is his own fault," commented James, shortly; "I've warned him to let his canteen alone, but he drank it dry before we had been a half-hour out. Don't touch yours, Mac, until you can't hold out one instant longer, and then not too much. The heat knocks one out quicker than a Mauser."

Mac nodded acquiescence to his friend's good advice as he rode off.

It was scarcely six o'clock when the troops wound up the hillsides and formed a skirmish line behind the American trenches.

The "51st" was the first to strike the rebel outposts, who delivered a scattering fire and then broke and ran — the foremost company

of Captain Williston's battalion in hot pursuit, yelling as they charged.

Gen. Wheaton had swung his brigade westward to Paranaque, being their destination first, for here, report said, the main body of the enemy were strongly entrenched. This town taken, Wheaton's command was to turn south and clear out the towns of Las Pinas and Bacoor, near the Zapote river.

It was the advance outposts around the town of Paranaque which Williston's men struck first. The Captain had a moment's anxiety as his men came under fire, for his companies were filled with raw recruits, and he could not be at all certain of how they would act.

But as his two foremost companies charged the enemy's trenches, not a man hung back or faltered. The Captain smiled contentedly and murmured, "They'll do." Another moment and the victorious shouts of his men proclaimed that they had taken the enemy's first position.

"Bravo! bravo! Captain, keep it up," called the Colonel, as he dashed by on his big bay, Mac at his heels on sturdy little Tagal.

By this time, the heat was so terrific that the Americans could not advance with any

rapidity; scores of soldiers, with here and there an officer, were lying along the roadside, overcome by heat. They, with the wounded, were being carried to the rear by Chinese coolies, who were also bringing up reserve ammunition.

At noon the division commander ordered an hour's rest for the exhausted command; and when, an hour later, the bugles sounded the advance, fully twenty per cent. of the men were unable to respond. General Lawton and his staff officers rode at the head of the command as the forward movement began.

Suddenly a terrific fire was opened up on them from a line of concealed trenches only five hundred yards off. Several officers and men fell at the first volley.

The "51st" was ordered to deploy, which they did quickly and in perfect order, Colonel Kendall conducting the movement; they advanced by rushes on the trenches fronting the river, halting several times to pour in a tremendous volley fire.

As they got near enough to see the red-coated, white-hatted Filipinos, a shout broke from our men; the enemy wavered, broke, and then fled, scattering in all directions,— the

Americans chasing them for fully ten minutes.

Mac found himself in the midst of the rush, yelling fiercely with the rest, everything forgotten, in the desire to catch and stop those fleeing figures. A slight, boyish-looking soldier near him stopped short, stumbled forward a step or two, then fell heavily to the ground, the glaze of death dulling his blue eyes even as Mac looked.

Mac shuddered and a great lump came into his throat, but there was no time to pause; on they swept, and before they halted had carried the second line of the defenses around the village of Las Pinas.

It was now nearly dark, and orders came for them to bivouac for the night in the fields south of Las Pinas.

Mac was wrong in his calculation, they had not crossed the Zapote bridge that night; and neither he nor any one dreamed of the desperate fighting it would take before the bridge could be won.

As the regiments broke ranks, the men, utterly exhausted, dropped to the ground just as they stood, too weary to even boil coffee or hunt a blanket to sleep on. Long trains of

coolies were hurrying on to the field with commissary supplies and water.

Captain Williston, having ridden all day, was not so utterly spent as his officers were, so he was busy in looking after his men. He put a stray Amigo to work boiling coffee, while Mac, who had come up to help, was foraging for hard bread.

The Captain's face wore a sad, stern look; he had lost four men killed, besides Lieutenant Desmond and twelve wounded. Every time his eye rested on Mac's slight, boyish figure, he sent up an earnest thanksgiving that his own had been spared.

In a distant part of the field Mac came upon Billy, who was staggering under an armful of canteens he was carrying to the men.

"Why, Billy, how on earth did you get here," exclaimed Mac in utter astonishment.

"Red Cross," was the brief reply.

"Do you mean you rode in the Red Cross ambulance?"

"Yes, sor." Billy insisted upon the *sor*, now-a-days. "'Till the fighting began, and I helped with the fellers done up by the awful heat; an' I carried water to the wounded in the field-dressing station. Thin some of them Filipino sharpshooters begun a firing on the

doctors and the wounded at the dressing station, and I got Clancy's gun and helped the hospital fellers shoot back.

"We had a very neat little fight of our own," drawled Billy, in perfect, but unconscious mimicry of young Dr. Lewis's manner and accent.

"Well, youngster, I should say you had; you look dead beat. Go and rest now, I'll deliver your canteens," and Mac, with kindly authority, relieved the tired boy of his burdens.

"Keep out of father's sight, Billy, he thinks you safe at the deposit. Have you seen James?"

"Yes; that's his canteen with an 'M.' and a cross on it; he's over on the right, under that clump of palms."

The newly-made corporal, regardless of the fresh white stripes he had fashioned with so much care, only the night before, was lying flat in the half-dried rice fields.

"Hello, James!" Mac sang out cheerily; then: "Heavens, man, do you know you are lying on an ant hill? you'll be eaten alive."

"I don't care if it's an active volcano," was the tired answer. Mac laughed and rolled his friend off his uncomfortable couch, then

handed him his canteen, telling him he had sent Billy off to rest.

"I don't wonder you're worn out, old fellow," continued Mac, "the way you've been charging trenches all day. I heard the old man (the Colonel is always so called in army parlance) tell dad that the long-legged corporal had earned his sergeant's chevrons, for you were the best sprinter and yeller in the whole outfit."

The two boys discussed the day's doings in detail, both admitting they were scared to death when they first came under fire.

Presently Mac went off in search of rations, and before long returned with two tin cups of hot coffee, some hardtack, and a can of tomatoes. He was smiling as he deposited the results of his foraging expedition. "I cautioned Billy to keep out of dad's way. I suppose the youngster has told you of all he's been up to to-day?" James nodded.

"Well, just now, as I started over here, I saw dad collar the poor youth and march him off."

"I couldn't see their faces, but I would have liked to have heard the interview. Dad can't stand being disobeyed, and I heard him order Billy to stay behind."

As soon as the two boys had finished their

frugal supper, they spread out the half shelter tent James had in his blanket-roll, and with a brief, but sincere prayer they dropped off into the deep sleep that utter physical exhaustion brings.

Captain Williston, having done all he could for his battalion, was on his way to partake of the scanty meal which his striker (soldier servant) had managed to prepare — some coffee, hardtack, and a can of beans, heated, when he stumbled on the unconscious Billy.

"Billy!" he ejaculated, in wrath and surprise, "You here?" "Yes, sor;" was the meek reply.

"Et tu Brute," murmured the Captain to himself, whimsically.

"Yes, sor, I know I'm a brute; but, Captain dear," said the boy's soft Irish voice coaxingly, "*did* ye's iver know an Irishman as cud kape out of a good honest scrap?"

The Captain smiled as he answered: "I was not calling names, Billy, that was just a quotation from the classics, meaning in good plain English that I was hurt and surprised that *you* had gone back on me." The Captain knew how the boy adored him.

"Well, you see, sor, all you said to me was 'stay behind, Billy;' and sure I have sor; I've staid *behint the regiment* this whole day, sor."

The boy's face was soberness itself, as he advanced his plea for mercy, but his eyes twinkled in spite of him.

"Have you fired a gun to-day?" questioned the Captain, sternly.

"Yes, sor;" was the honest reply, though Billy felt from his Captain's stern aspect, that he was ruining his case by admitting it. "'Twas when them divils, sor, began a firing on our wounded men, sor, back at the dressing station. Clancy, he was wounded, you know, he gave me his gun and fixed the sights for me, an' I did me level best, an' I won't deny it. But I was always behint, sor, as you told me."

Billy's merry, freckled face looked white and drawn, the big blue eyes were black with excitement and fatigue.

"And what have you been doing since we halted?"

"Nothing, sor, but fill the men's canteens; they're wore out wid the heat and the fightin'. And, Oh! didn't our regiment do fine, sor." There was all the pride of ownership in the boy's weary tones.

The Captain laid his hand on Billy's shock of rough, sandy hair, and answered very gently: "They did, Billy, but you have done

well, too. Come now, and have something to eat. Ryan has some coffee, I know."

So the two — the tall, grave officer and the small waif of the camp—sat down, and shared the scanty meal. When, a little later, Ryan appeared with an armful of hay and half a blanket, the Captain insisted upon Billy's sharing his field-bed with him.

Early the next morning our troops occupied Paranaque and Las Pinas, without a shot being fired,— the enemy had deserted them.

While the men were at breakfast, Colonel Kendall rode up to Captain Williston and asked him to select two companies from his battalion to accompany General Lawton on a reconnoitering expedition southward, on the Bacoor road.

The General had been so pleased with the fighting qualities of the "51st," on the previous day, that he had selected his escort from it, so the Colonel was proud and pleased.

On entering Las Pinas our commanders found that the enemy had constructed fifteen-feet trenches for a distance of nine miles, and the Amigos, or so-called friendly natives, reported the towns south, which were the ob-

jective points of the next advance, as similarly protected. It was to ascertain the position and strength of the Filipinos that General Lawton was to make this reconnaissance, in person. Early in the morning the Filipinos opened fire with some old-fashioned cannon, they had captured from the Spaniards, but our artillery soon silenced them. Then General Lawton, on his big white horse, which made him a shining and conspicuous mark for Filipino sharpshooters, surrounded by his staff officers, and followed closely by "B" and "G" companies of the "51st," set forth on this reconnaissance.

Captain Williston had selected those two companies because of the conspicuous gallantry displayed by the two young lieutenants in command of them. He had noticed their gallantry all the day before. Both of these youngsters, as the older officer mentally designated the younger ones, were fresh and fit for another day's hard work; both being splendid specimens of athletes. They had come out of the hard fighting and marching of yesterday, better than any other officers in the regiment. Some of the older captains were disposed to growl a bit at this selection, but, on the whole, the regiment was content to

leave its reputation in the hands of Talbot and Desmond. Talbot was a West Pointer, from a rich old Massachusetts family, a big, blonde giant, who had played half back on the West Point team the year they beat the "middies," ten to nothing. His men adored him and would follow wherever the Lieutenant led.

Desmond was quite another type; a tall, clean-cut, wiry, young fellow of good Irish parentage. He had won his commission from the ranks, having been a sergeant in the 3rd Cavalry during the battle of Santiago. He had won a medal of honor on July 1st, had been badly wounded on the 2nd, and sent home on one of those first horror hospital ships, so-called.

He was a reserved man, blushed like a girl when anyone hinted at his medal of honor,—not at all the popular fellow Talbot was, a fact shown in the way the two men were named — Talbot was "Dick" to everyone, high and low, even to the children in the regiment. His men — behind his back, of course — called him "Dick" or "Dandy;" he was the best-dressed man in the regiment.

They admired Desmond and respected him beyond measure; but he was always formally addressed as Mr. Desmond, or occasionally,

as Desmond. His men found him strict, but absolutely just, and they trusted him and would follow him to the death.

It was barely dawn when the little reconnoitreing party set out, and proceeded slowly south, scouting the country carefully, and, as they went, firing continuous volleys to clear the country before them of a possibly concealed enemy. They had passed through several deserted villages, showing, in their ruined nipa huts, the effective shelling of the navy, when they came to one, the approach to it being rather narrow, with heavy typical undergrowth on both sides of the road.

General Lawton halted his party, and, with his staff, dismounted, handing their horses over to the orderly and telling him to ride back a distance, in case the enemy should be found here.

Suddenly, from one of the huts, appeared an old Filipino woman, waving a bit of a white rag, on a long bamboo pole, and calling shrilly, "Amigo, Amigo."

"Answer the flag of truce, Corporal Marvin; you understand their lingo," commanded Lieutenant Talbot.

James ran forward to parley with the old hag, who jabbered and gesticulated away at a great rate.

James came back and reported: "She says the insurgents have gone south, that there are only a few women and children in the village, who all welcome the Americans and are their friends." And, indeed, from every house a white flag was flying.

But General Lawton was an old Indian fighter and he trusted the Filipinos and their flags of truce about as much as he did the Apaches, down in Arizona, where he beat them at their own game and captured old Geronimo.

"Send your pickets ahead," he commanded.

Corporal Marvin with his squad had reached the church porch, over which a big white flag was flying; when suddenly, from the church itself, from every hut and from both sides of the road up which they had marched, a terrific fire was poured in on the little force. Two of the corporal's squad fell at the first volley, one dead, the other shot in the leg and helpless.

Quick as a flash, James and the man next him caught the wounded soldier by his feet and his shoulders and begun their retreat in good order, joining the rest of the party without further casualties.

"Well done, Corporal," sang out General Lawton, heartily.

James blushed beneath his tropical tan, but somehow all he could think of was the superintendent's office in the Randall High School, and a guilty boy hiding a paper which did not belong to him—"I haven't half wiped that out yet," he said to himself.

General Lawton brought his little force to a stand on a rise at a bend of the road, which, by its thick growth of trees, formed a sort of natural defense.

He saw instantly that he was surrounded and greatly outnumbered; careful as his pickets had scouted, they had failed to locate the treacherous enemy, who had allowed the party to pass them by unmolested, trapping them with a false flag of truce, and then opening fire.

For half an hour the fight waged fiercely, General Lawton, and, indeed, every officer picking up the rifles of the dead and wounded, and using them effectively. In the heart of the fight Mr. Talbot came up and, saluting respectfully, reported that the ammunition was nearly gone.

"I am counting on my orderly, he had his instructions, and we shall have reinforcements inside of an hour. Caution your men not to waste a single bullet."

The fire of our men slackened, evidently encouraging the enemy, for, a few moments later, Mr. Desmond, who was holding their rear, which was an exposed position was startled to hear a crackling of brush down the steep side of the little knoll. Instantly he ran forward along its crest and there, almost upon them, were fully a hundred Filipinos. For half a second the young officer stood there, the target for scores of bullets, which pattered around him like hail stones; then dropping his gun, he drew his sword, waved it over his head, and uttered that magical word, "Charge!" which, accompanied by a good American yell, routed the Spaniards at San Juan, and was doing the same in the Philippines.

As the young officer ran down the slope, every man was at his heels, yelling fiercely as he fired. The insurgents fled, scattering in all directions,— firing a last, weak volley as they ran. Young Desmond fell heavily, without a word, shot through the hip.

His men, scrambling back into line, had not noticed that he was hit, until Mr. Talbot ran past them — and, stooping quickly, lifted the wounded officer in his arms, as if he had been a baby. The cowardly enemy, who

seemed not to know a gallant, chivalrous action, concentrated a hot fire upon the young American giant, who walked back as carefully and cooly as if it were a football he was carrying across the gridiron, instead of an unconscious, wounded man.

Mr. Desmond was laid beside half a dozen other wounded men. Presently he revived and sat up; he had been shot through the hip and the wound was frightfully painful. He beckoned a young bugler to his side, who helped him apply a first-aid bandage to his wound, and then tie it up as well as possible.

"Now cut me a stick and help me on to my feet, or foot, rather," commanded the young officer. In a moment he had hobbled back to the firing line, to be greeted with a great cheer of admiration from his men. He had paused to shake hands with Mr. Talbot, and say, huskily, "God bless you, old man."

"How much ammunition, Mr. Talbot?" asked General Lawton, presently.

"We can't hold out more than ten minutes, sir."

"Very good," was the reply.

The General was as cool as if the answer had been ten hours. He had decided to retreat, not down the road, but to the north,

across an open rice field, which the enemy, apparently, had not occupied.

The wounded were placed carefully and tenderly on the backs of the strongest men, and slowly the backward movement was begun,—Mr. Desmond hobbling bravely along, refusing all assistance. "There are others who need it more," he said.

As the Insurgents, from their concealed trenches, saw the Americans retreating, hampering themselves with a lot of helpless men, they sent up a shrill cry of triumph, and, leaping from the shelter of their entrenchments, they thought to overwhelm the little party of Americans; but even as they exposed themselves to our men, they met with such deadly volleys that they broke and rushed back to their shelter, thoroughly disorganized.

A scouting party, the next day, found fifty-seven dead Filipinos in one trench.

"Steady, men, steady!" cautioned the officers. "Save your ammunition."

Just then, from the Bay side, came the unmistakable sound, faint though it was, of a Yankee cheer, and out from the banana bushes, across the open, broke a battalion of Marines, while over the heads of the retreating party came the long, peculiar swish of

shells, which began to burst amongst the enemy's entrenchments.

"Three cheers for the 'Navy,'" yelled a boy soldier in the ranks; and it was taken up with a will, which the Marines answered with a hearty shout of encouragement.

The lookout on the gunboats Helena and Monadnock had discovered the little command, retreating across the open, and the Marines were sent to their rescue, while the guns were trained on the insurgent trenches, which were plainly discernible by the aid of glasses.

At that moment, down the road, came a battalion of regulars, with the orderly of the Division Commander, still holding the horses of the General and his staff.

He had, evidently, understood General Lawton's order, and ridden back for reinforcement, on hearing the firing.

Again came a cheer from the navy boats. They could see what our men, down in the low fields could not, the Filipinos, like a flock of frightened sheep, were fleeing in all directions, throwing away their rifles and scarlet uniform coats, as they ran.

A young and wildly excited aide came tearing down the road giving some message to

General Lawton, who listened to him calmly, then turned and said: "Take your men back to camp, Mr. Talbot, rest them and join your regiment at the Zapote river. You, Mr. Desmond, and our wounded, will go aboard the Helena. I have written a personal note to the Commander to look carefully after so gallant a young officer."

Then, with a courteous salute, the great General rode off, followed by the relieving battalion.

When the two companies reached Las Pinas, they found it deserted, save by a small guard, who were looking after the inhabitants, who had returned to their homes when they found the Americans not only did not intend to kill them, but were willing to protect and feed them.

The sound of heavy firing could plainly be heard to the south.

The command of "G" Company fell to the first sergeant, Peter Kelly, in Mr. Desmond's absence. He was a typical old soldier, who had fought in almost every Indian campaign since the Civil War.

"Are your men ready to march, Sergeant?" asked Mr. Talbot, an hour later.

"Yes, sir. Good and ready, sir."

CHAPTER XI.

AS the two companies came up on the firing line about two o'clock, the "51st" greeted them with an approving shout, for the story of their desperate fight had already reached the front.

"Go to the rear and rest;" "We don't need you;" "You've done enough fightin' for one day;" and "Sure the regiment's proud of you, boys," were the good-natured comments hurled at them.

Colonel Randall rode up and shook Mr. Talbot's hand warmly.

"Your conduct was most gallant, sir; as plucky a rescue of a wounded man, sir, as I ever heard of. General Lawton can't say too much for you."

The tall, young giant reddened up and replied, awkwardly, "Why, Colonel, I didn't even know he saw me, he never said a word."

"It will be published in orders, Mr. Talbot. That is the General's way;" and the Colonel rode down before the two companies to tell

SAN SEBASTIAN CHURCH, MANILA.

the men, in person, how proud he was of them.

Since dawn the fighting had been going on. The Filipinos, strongly entrenched on the Zapote river, beyond the bridge, which they had partially destroyed, had held out stubbornly since daybreak. Our artillery could not be used, for such was the position of our troops it would have been dangerous to them.

The coming up of "G" and "B" companies had been the one break in the long, hot day, which was now wearing to a close.

At six o'clock our force had only succeeded in pushing the enemy back about five hundred yards, and even that much advantage had been gained by a large casualty list.

The long coolie trains were steadily occupied in carrying our dead and wounded to the rear. Never before had the Filipinos made such a determined stand.

They were serving out hot coffee to the weary men on the firing line, as Colonel Kendall on his big bay and Mac on Tagal rode slowly down the hastily thrown up entrenchment of the "51st."

The fine-looking old officer sat up, straight and stiff in his saddle, though he looked worn and white with fatigue. The bullets from the

enemy, over the river, buzzed past him, but they did not disturb him. He was an example of soldierly courage to every man in the ranks, and the men felt that he was, though perhaps they could not have given their reasons for it.

Mac found himself dodging, as an occasional bullet came unpleasantly near.

The Colonel was in a brown study, working out some plan evidently. He was scanning the deep, narrow river, and estimating distances.

"My compliments to your father, Mac, and ask him to report to me, here."

By the time Captain Williston had reached him, the Colonel's plan was cut and dried. Captain Williston's battalion, almost to a man, could swim; the Captain had given them swimming drills at Tampa, before they had gone to Cuba, and had continued it ever since their arrival in the Philippines.

The Colonel's plan was a daring one, the marines had, at last, managed to land their Maxim gun on a point which overlooked the Filipino defenses. Below it was a bar in the river, over which a good, large body of troops could cross in comparative safety, if the attention of the enemy could be engaged by a sharp attack on their front, which they be-

lieved to be impregnable. To Captain Williston was this attack entrusted.

At dusk, those few moments which, in the tropics, intervene between daylight and night, for they have no twilight, he was to swim the river with his battalion, attacking the enemy's front, while two regiments of infantry would cross the bar and come up on the left flank of the insurgents.

The marines, with their deadly gun, were to pour in a terrific fire from their point of vantage.

It was a daring plan, the Colonel knew, but one which he thought would succeed, and would not cause him any greater loss than his command had suffered all day, and would have to suffer on the morrow, if the insurgents were not dislodged from their stronghold.

As the shadows of night began to fall, the first battalion prepared for its daring venture. Only men who could swim were to go, but more than one plucky youngster who could not swim a stroke arranged with a more fortunate "bunkie," who could swim, for transportation across the river.

It was just dusk, the light dim enough to partially conceal the swimmer, when, at a low-

voiced command from Captain Williston, who was in the lead, his battalion stripped to the waist, and, holding the rifles and ammunition belts high, with one hand, slipped quietly into the water.

Mac was off duty when they started, so no one noticed that he had quietly taken his place with his father's company and was swimming swiftly with the others.

"We'll stay together, dad," he said to himself.

The command was fully half way across when they were discovered by the Filipinos, who had been hotly engaged with the marines and their death-dealing Maxim.

Once they were discovered a hot fire was poured in upon them, but not a man was hit.

Dripping wet, they formed on the shore, and, with triumphant, ear-piercing yells, charged the enemy which had withstood them a whole day for the first time in the campaign. At the same time the flanking regiments came up on the left, and the fight proved a short one. The Filipinos fired a volley, wavered, then broke and fled, leaving their guns, ammunition, dead and wounded, on the field. Our troops had won a hard-fought but complete victory.

If Madge could have seen Mac, the "dude," as she often teasingly called him, after the fight was over, dripping wet, covered with mud from the rice fields, his hair on end, barefooted, for he had to discard his water-soaked riding boots, she would have thought him a veritable young tramp. His father passed him by without knowing him, until Mac called out "Are you going to cut me, dad?"

"MacLean Williston! how did you get here?" asked his father, sternly.

"Just as you did, sir," was the somewhat saucy reply. "Excuse me, sir, I don't mean to be disrespectful; but the Colonel excused me from further duty to-night, and, dad, you know what I said the other day; '*Let's keep together.*' When I can, I'm bound to stay with you, especially when you are going into danger."

Captain Williston groaned mentally, what could he do with this boy, who insisted upon sharing his danger. Mac never knew it, but his fate was settled from that moment; his father determined that the boy should go back home as soon as possible.

The bridge was soon repaired. They brought with them the clothing which the

men had discarded for their swim, and all their other supplies, and the balance of Lawton's force was hurried across the river.

A native priest, who came in from a nearby village, explained the obstinancy of the Filipinos in holding their ground by saying that it was at this very spot they had defeated a large Spanish force, only the year before; also that Tuliga, the "Witch of Tondo" had prophesied that here, at Zapote, the Americanos would suffer a terrible and entire defeat.

Inspired by the prophecy of one whom the superstitious natives firmly believed to be endowed with supernatural power, the Filipinos had vowed on the Crucifix to die, before they would yield, and, poor creatures, many of them had faithfully kept their oath. The number of killed and wounded was appalling.

Mac was sickened by the dreadful sights. For the first time he saw the horror of war; before he had only felt the wild, thrilling excitement of the fight. Now he saw its results and his heart was heavy. He found James, and the two boys made their way to a little church, desecrated and partially destroyed, to be sure, still the Blessed Sacrament had been reserved in the rudely-carved stone tabernacle. Our Lord had dwelt on that

humble altar, at which they knelt and prayed fervently for the souls of those who had died that day in battle, friend and enemy alike, and they besought God to send His peace on this distracted land.

As they retraced their steps towards the field where the regiment was to bivouac for the night, they met the native priest again. He had seen them coming out of his little church. He looked at them sadly, yet sternly, then said, bitterly, in Spanish:

"There is nothing left in God's house to steal."

"You mistake us, Reverend Father," replied Mac, quickly. "See, we are Catholics, like yourself;" and he showed the little Sacred Heart badge, pinned to the inside of his blue shirt.

"We went to pray, to say our beads;" bringing out the Rosary Madge had given him when he left home; blushing, too, for, boy-like, Mac hated any public show of his devotions.

James followed suit, and the good priest looked at the two young soldiers in amazement.

"Americanos and not heretics!" he exclaimed.

The boys laughed and answered cheerfully:

"Americanos, and good Catholics, Father."

"Are there many more like you?" asked the priest, simply.

"*Millions* of us," Mac replied, energetically, waving his hands to impress the vast numbers of "us" on the priest's mind.

The boys insisted upon Father Miguel returning to camp with them and they became very good friends before long.

Mac questioned him about Tuliga, and found that she was reputed to live at Imus, the large town to the south, which they were to attack next.

"I wonder if we shall find Don Camilio there," cried Mac, very much excited at the thought; whereupon he told Father Miguel the story of his encounter with the famous "Witch of Tondo," and of little Esmeralda, and of how they were hoping to find her father, through what José had revealed.

"I would not be surprised if the boy had told you the truth," replied the priest, thoughtfully.

"There are many Spaniards imprisoned at Imus; they have been there, strictly guarded, for over a year. No one is allowed to even see them. Imus is strongly fortified; the

Spaniards required months of hard fighting to capture it, only two years ago, and then they did not or could not hold it."

Mac's heart misgave him,— more fighting on the morrow,— and he could not help thinking of the awful sights he had just seen; dead and wounded three deep in the trenches, the living pinned down by the dead, imploring to be put out of their agony. However, it was a comfort to know that by this time the poor wretches were in the field hospitals, being as well and tenderly cared for as our own brave men.

The next morning at daybreak, to the utter amazement of everyone, the Mayor of Imus, carrying a huge, gold-headed cane, and wearing his badge of authority, walked into Bacoor and formally surrendered the town.

He was sent on to General Lawton at Las Pinas.

He told the General that the insurgents had passed through Imus in utter confusion, carrying with them one hundred dead and three hundred wounded.

The Mayor said that the people of Imus were glad to welcome the Americans. He said that the so-called Filipino army consisted simply of Aguinaldo's cut-throats.

He also informed General Lawton that, unfortunately, the Filipinos had managed to remove their arsenal, cartridge factory, and powder mill at Imus, to Buena Vista, a stronghold further south.

There came such a sudden though effervescent look of satisfaction in the Mayor's eyes, as he gave this bit of information, that Mac, who had accompanied Colonel Kendall, who wished to be present at the surrender of the town, suspected the fellow of treachery, then and there.

"Look out for him, Colonel," he whispered. "The smooth, old, comic-opera villain, he means mischief, I'll bet."

Mac was right. Later on, the old fellow did betray his new friends, but of that we shall hear some other time.

When the Mayor had finished his little speech, Mac got permission to question him regarding Don Camilio.

But the Mayor, who had been so amiable and pleasant before, became sullen and noncommunicative once the subject of the Spanish prisoners was broached. He shrugged his shoulders indifferently at Mac's story of Esmé's longing for her father.

"I know nothing of the prisoners," he said. "Low wretches, all, but, perhaps, your friend is amongst them. I did hear that, in the hurry of their retreat, the insurgents allowed fourteen to escape."

Mac looked the indignation he felt it unwise to speak.

"Colonel, may I have a few hours' leave?" asked Mac, saluting that officer in the most approved fashion. There won't be any more fighting to-day, I guess, and I would like to find out something of Esmé's father, if I can."

The Colonel's eyes twinkled solemnly as he said, "Certainly, Mr. Williston, only don't put the river between us, as you did last night; *I* can't swim."

Mac reddened up and looked a bit foolish. "I didn't know you knew about it," he muttered incoherently.

"Hear about it? Of course I've heard about it;" went on the Colonel with mock indignation. "A staff officer of mine to swim a river, and take part in a fight, a pretty hot one, too, without my permission!"

"I wasn't on duty, sir," began Mac, excusingly; then he saw the smile in the Colonel's eyes, and knew he was only teazing or "jollying" him, as he himself would say.

"I hope you won't reprimand me in orders, sir."

"You'll hear from me in orders, all right, young man," was the somewhat enigmatical response. "Now off on your errand of mercy, young knight."

Afterwards, Mac tried to salve his conscience by construing this joking remark of the Colonel's into a permission or rather approval of a very dangerous, foolhardy exploit.

But, after all, conscience is the one thing in the world that *will* make itself heard, unless a long course of drowning its promptings has been pursued. So Mac found, when his desires pulled one way, and his conscience quite another.

As he rode into one end of the little town of Bacoor, he saw entering at the other, a curious little procession. A group of ragged, wild-looking men were being escorted down the main street of the village, by a hundred or more American soldiers, who were cheering them, offering them coffee, and cool water from their canteens.

The crowd halted at the central plaza in front of the church; the plaza where the captain commanding the battalion, left to guard the town, had pitched his headquarters.

Beyond a doubt these were the Spanish prisoners, of whose escape Mac had heard from the Mayor of Imus. He spurred Tagal eagerly forward and joined the rapidly increasing crowd collecting around them.

A tall, fine-looking young Spaniard, who acted as their leader, stepped forth and gravely saluted the American captain.

Our men were shaking hands with the balance of the group, clapping them heartily on the shoulder, and pressing all sorts of refreshments upon these men, whom, a year ago, they had been fighting.

The tall man proved to be a Spanish captain of infantry, the balance of the party consisted of his sergeant and six privates, a wealthy banker from the north of Luzon, a government official, with several other less important personages. Amongst these, however, was a fine-looking Mestizo, who had been a non-commissioned officer, a sergeant, in the "Garda Civolta," which was formed entirely from the loyal natives and had done good service in helping suppress the insurrections. The conversation was, of course, in Spanish, but Mac understood it perfectly now, and listened to every word with eager attention.

"What!" exclaimed the American, "you

know nothing of what has happened in the past year and a half?"

The Spanish officer explained that he and his party had been captured early in January, '98, the other prisoners a little later.

"We are as people raised from the dead," he exclaimed, dramatically. "Of our beloved ones, our friends, of the world at large, we know nothing. Our captors have told us a lot of ridiculous lies which, of course, we do not believe. They have said that the Americans, your great nation, had fought and conquered our beloved Spain." Here every battered hat was lifted in honor of that dear land which they had never hoped to see again. "They tell us our little King, Alphonso, God give him every blessing," again the ragged headgears were raised, as if they had been the helmets of plumed knights, "was murdered; and that the United States had taken possession of Cuba, Porto Rico, and these Philippines. I believed them *all* lies, but now that I find you Americans here, and fighting, I can see there was some truth in what they told us."

"Golly, wouldn't I just like the job o'telling them fellers the news, *nit*. Wot's de fun o'hitting a feller whin he's down."

It was Billy's familiar voice at Mac's elbow.

My sentiments, exactly, youngster. Where have you been the last two days? When this talky talk is over, come with me, and we'll try and find out something about Don Camilio."

It wasn't the pleasantest task in the world for the American officer to have to tell his Spanish confrere, how the map of the world had been changed in a few short months, and at what a rate the United States had been making history.

It was one thing to lower the pride of an arrogant, supercillious enemy; but quite another to crush this poor victim of an ignorant, savage warfare, who stood there ragged, dirty, and worn to a shadow; waiting, with just a touch of hauteur in his courtly manner, for the American officer to speak.

As the story began with the blowing up of the Maine, the Declaration of war by Congress, Dewey and his wonderful victory at Manila Bay, Mac watched the sudden transitions in the man's face, from incredulity to surprise, horror; then, as the tale continued of the glorious victory of our army at Santiago, the marvelous, yet terrible fight of Sampson and the utter defeat and annihilation of the

gallant Cervera's fleet, then the surrender of the Spanish army; to shame, humiliation, and, finally, blank despair. He turned away, with a groan, and covered his face with his hands. Quickly, in respectful silence, the crowd of curious onlookers melted away, leaving the poor fellow to bear this bitter humiliation, alone.

"I never thought I'd feel so *pizen* sorry, fer a *dago,* did yer?" whispered Billy, in genuine but slangy sympathy, as the two boys walked away.

The escaped prisoners were at once given clean clothing, food, and comfortable quarters until they could be sent into Manila.

As soon as they were rested, Mac questioned them regarding Don Camilio and, to his delight, found that Esmé's father had been of the party but was too weak to attempt his escape with the others.

The boys found that the young Mestizo, or halfbreed sergeant, knew all about him, and so plied him with all sorts of quick inquiries. Gonzales was the man's name, and the boys found him not only intelligent, but, when they had explained their mission, very sympathetic, also.

He knew perfectly who the boy José was, had frequently seen him around the insurgent camp.

"He has told you the truth. Tuliga lives on the outskirts of Imus; her hut is in the midst of a typical jungle, and it was there we prisoners were being taken when we made our escape. The insurgents could only spare a small guard to go with us, and that is how we managed our escape, Don Camilio, as you know, being too ill to come with us. He lies, undoubtedly, at the witch's hut."

"We must go at once to the rescue," cried Mac, jumping up.

"What would you do, Señor?" asked the Mestizo.

"Take a company of infantry and surround the hut, capture the "witch," and release the poor prisoner," said Mac, promptly.

The sergeant shrugged his shoulders. "You would get there, even supposing you could locate the spot, only to find the hut empty, and the bird flown. Every so-called Amigo you see here, has but just cast aside his red coat and rifle. He is an insurrecto until you Americans capture him or make him run, then he throws away his uniform and his gun, and becomes an Amigo. But they are

all spies and before your men have been gone five minutes, the news would be sent ahead to Tuliga, and your march would be for nothing."

"We must do something, sergeant, can't you help us?" said Mac, impatiently.

The man paused a moment to think, then he said, slowly:

"Señor Lieutenant, with two or three picked men, *we* could do it. There would be some danger, but the risk would be small. Can the Lieutenant command three men to-night?"

"I can," was Mac's confident reply.

CHAPTER XII.

MAC sent Billy off with a note for James, telling him to get leave, so as to join the expedition, also to enlist the services of a young fellow named Lessing, who was the son of an officer. He was trying for a commission, and the boys knew him very well, and liked and trusted him.

"Will tell you details of plan when you get here; so get a move on you and don't fail to bring Lessing, and both of you remember the thing is a dead secret. Mum's the word."

While Billy was off on his errand, Mac learned more of the details of Don Camilio's captivity and the reasons for his capture.

The insurgents had learned that he kept a great deal of money in his house; he possessed also silver and jewels of great value, so he had long been a marked man with them. But what had brought their wrath down on him, and caused the destruction of the hacienda and burning of his plantation, his own imprisonment, and torture; was the fact

learned by the insurgents from Tuliga, the woman, who had been Esmé's nurse, that her master had a list of names of the "Insurgent Junta" in Manila, a list that compromised many wealthy and prominent men, who had never been suspected of sympathy or complicity with the insurrection; so that Don Camilio incurred the deadly enmity of those traitors.

The Don would have been killed long ago, if they had been able to find the list, or discover the hidden money and jewels.

Tuliga, and José, who was her nephew, Sergeant Gonzales explained, had searched the hacienda in vain; they had even tried torture on the old gentleman, but he had kept his secret in spite of them.

"That Tuliga is a devil," said the young Mestizo, a fierce light in his eyes, and his face livid with hate.

"She would tell the old gentleman one day that his little daughter was dead, the next day she would return and say it was a mistake, that she was in prison for stealing bread to keep her from starving. She has nearly driven him mad; and we have been powerless, but now, with the Señor Lieutenant's aid, we

will punish the wicked witch, and rescue the poor gentleman."

Mac thoroughly enjoyed being called Señor Lieutenant by this fine, soldierly-looking Filipino, who, of course, had no idea of that young gentleman's real status.

Truth to tell, Mac arranged all the details of his expedition with such a quiet air of authority, that he swept away all objections and obstacles. The plan now was, not only to rescue Don Camilio, but to try and capture Aguinaldo's chief "Mascot" and prophetess, the "Witch of Tondo."

Sergeant Gonzales was a native of this province, born and brought up near Imus. He knew the tropical jungles, with their byways and turnings, as only a boy can know who has spent his life in them. He was confident of being able to locate Tuliga's abode, for from the conversation of his captors, he had learned of the whereabouts of her hut, and indeed had been well on the road to it before making his escape.

Fortunately for the success of Mac's plan, his father, with his battalion, was garrisoning Bacoor. When James and young Lessing arrived from that town, they found Mac had everything arranged. He had six fresh ponies

engaged, the extra one, which Billy was to lead, was for Don Camilio to ride.

Mac had demurred to Billy's going on the expedition, but Billy absolutely refused to be left out, and Sergeant Gonzales remarked in a low aside to Mac, "He can hold the ponies while we surround the hut, so there will be no danger for the brave little one." With this understanding, Billy was permitted to join them.

The plan which Mac and the young Mestizo had worked out was simple enough, and promised success, with little or no danger. To pass their own pickets was really the most difficult part of the program; but they managed it by riding out of the town towards Bacoor, the road to which, of course, was open and patrolled by our troops.

When halted by the sentry they stopped at once. The corporal of the guard recognized Mac as Colonel Kendall's aide, both James and young Lessing had signed passes, while a word from Mac, spoken with a decided air of authority, was sufficient to let Billy and the Sergeant through the line.

I expect I'll *catch* it to-morrow, for this, thought that young man, ruefully, but he kept his opinion to himself, and rode off with

his party, as if he had every right in the world to be starting off at dusk, in the heart of a treacherous enemy's country, on the wildest sort of a scheme.

Mac was shrewd enough to know, that if his expedition succeeded, only glory would be theirs; but if they failed, condign punishment would be the fate of each one of them.

They were all ready and willing to take the risk. Sergeant Gonzales, alone, thought all was being conducted by the military authority of the young Señor Lieutenant.

"The life and conditions are so different from the home ones, that sometimes you just have to go ahead and do things," was Mac's argument, and, after all, it must be admitted there was some truth in it.

Once Mac had gotten his little party through the picket line, Sergeant Gonzales took the lead. In the first place they all halted beneath a big group of palms, and untying a bundle from each one of their saddles, they transformed themselves into fair imitations of the "friendly" natives.

"Wouldn't the girls at home think us awful guys," chuckled Mac, as he slipped into the loose white blouse, exactly like the Chinamen wear in the United States.

As our three boys were covering up their regulation blue flannel shirts with the ugly, but comfortable native costume, the young Mestizo Sergeant caught sight of something which made him exclaim wonderingly:

"Why do you wear such things as those?" pointing a scornful finger at the well-worn Sacred Heart badge which was carefully pinned to each boyish breast, whilst Billy, in addition, wore his cherished "swimming badge."

"Because we are Catholics," replied Mac, promptly," and wouldn't be without them for anything. Why don't you wear a medal or something blessed, yourself, Sergeant? You certainly ought to be a Catholic."

"I used to be," he answered, gloomily, "but I thought when you were educated and intelligent, you had to give up religion."

Mac was no longer surprised at such notions; he had come across them often in his intercourse with the better class of natives, ignorant, half-educated as they were, their ideas seemed to be that religion, education, intelligence, and liberty could not exist together.

So all he said was: "We don't feel that way in the United States, but we'll tell you more about it some other time."

They had been going south for sometime, when the Sergeant dismounted, and going up to a tall lone palm-tree, on the side of the road, he examined it carefully by the light of several matches, and soon gave an exclamation of satisfaction. He called the boys to look, and they saw at about the level of a man's eye, a small skull, cut deeply in the bark.

"That's Tuliga's sign," he remarked. "Here we must take to the jungle, and ride in single file. Not a word must be said, and, if we should be stopped by insurgent sentries, say not a word, leave all to me."

They had proceeded for an hour unmolested in this fashion, with only low whispered words now and then, when the halfbreed dismounted to examine the trail, when, on making an abrupt turn in the narrow path, a faint glimmer of light pierced the blackness of the night.

Fortunately for the rescuing party, the moon did not rise until after midnight, and though this made it more difficult to follow the trail in the jungle, still the intense darkness was a protection against prying eyes.

An electric thrill of excitement ran through the little party, as they caught the faint glimmer of light for which for some time their

eyes had been straining through the blackness of a tropical night.

They halted at once, and quietly dismounted, leaving Billy as they had planned, in charge of their horses, while with bare feet they crept noiselessly forward. Suddenly they came upon a clearing, in the center of which stood the abode of the "Witch." It was a nipa hut, such as the natives live in, only a bit larger and better built. It stood high up from the ground, with a broad porch running its entire length, and here, standing still, leaning on his gun, they caught sight of the Filipino guard.

"Stay here, while I go forward and see how many more there are," whispered Sergeant Gonzales. He was gone what seemed an age to the waiting boys, who were in a state of intense excitement.

"It is as I thought," he reported, presently. "I climbed a tree and got a good look into the hut; there is only one other sentry, and he is asleep; Tuliga is cooking one of her witch's messes over her fire, while the Don is not even bound, so sure are they of him."

Obeying the Sergeant's hastily whispered directions, the three boys followed him, as he advanced.

A narrow stream of light from the lamp inside showed the careless sentry standing at ease, but the narrow track leading up to the hut was in utter darkness — also one end of the porch. Here the Sergeant and Mac climbed up and waited for the sentry to make some move which would enable them to take him unawares. If possible they wanted to overcome him before he could give the alarm to those inside.

They had not long to wait; presently, with a yawn, the fellow shouldered his rifle, stepped to the open door, looked in, then slowly paced up the lighted end of the porch, turned, and slowly walked towards the two men waiting for him in the darkness.

On he came, humming softly a sweet, plaintive native air; suddenly, without the faintest warning, the cold muzzle of a pistol pressed his forehead, and a fierce, stern voice in his own language whispered: "One sound and you are a dead man." Dumb with amazement, the man submitted quietly to being bound and gagged. The Sergeant had provided himself with a length of good, stout Manila rope.

The sentry being out of the way, James and young Lessing joined Mac and Sergeant Gon-

zales, Mac covered the open doorway, while the other three did the same for the windows, which opened wide on to the porch. Some slight sound caused the woman, Tuliga, to lift her eyes, from the evil-smelling mess she was brewing over a big charcoal brazier.

She saw Mac's gallant, trim young figure standing in the doorway, and she *knew* him. A look of furious anger leaped into her face, which changed as she saw herself surrounded, into one of deadly hate and impotent fury. Quick as lightning she had drawn a long, sharp knife, and like a wildcat, had made a spring at Don Camilio, but quick as she was, the young Mestizo seemed to have divined her murderous purpose, and with one leap had wrested the knife from her and thrown her to the floor.

For a moment or two all was confusion; the partially aroused sentry number two was awakened from his sleep only to find himself in the hands of the "Americanos," whom he feared quite as much as he hated. He at once began to yell for mercy, begging them not to kill him, and he would do anything they wanted. It was with some difficulty they made him understand that he was not to be taken right out and shot.

It took three of them to bind and gag the maddened woman. She was a frightful object to contemplate, struggling to free herself, and hurling the most awful and blasphemous oaths at her young captors. They stifled her, when a gag, made of the united handkerchiefs of the boys, was stuffed into her wicked mouth.

Poor Don Camilio had gazed upon the scene enacted before him, with such a vacant, bewildered look, that Mac feared that Sergeant Gonzales might be right, that the poor gentleman had lost his mind. But he rallied presently, when Mac explained, as well as he could, who they were and from whom they came.

At the mention of Esmeralda's name, a deep sob escaped him, and in a voice broken with emotion, he exclaimed:

"Ah! then she is alive and well, thanks be to God, and to you, Senor Lieutenant, and your brave comrades, who have come to my rescue."

But there was no time for explanations now. Mac felt uneasy until he should be able to get Don Camilio into Las Pinas, and his prisoners under lock and key, especially the woman, whose baleful eyes followed his every movement.

Mac's observant eyes had taken in every detail of the "Witch's" abode, for, as he soon afterwards wrote Madge, describing the night's adventure: "Ever since I was a kid, knee-high to a duck, I have read in "Grimm's fairy tales and others, various descriptions of a witch's hut, so you may be sure nothing escaped me in Tuliga's mansion.

"Over the doorway was a row of skulls of all sizes, which Gonzales declared belonged to her numerous victims; then from the ceiling hung a string of what we boys thought were some kind of herbs, until Gonzales showed us that they were dried-up *human fingers*. I can see you shudder as you read this. He said they were the *trigger* fingers of our poor fellows killed in battle, and from them Tuliga made her charms, which were supposed to render those who wore them safe from American bullets." And last, but not least, he wrote, "She really had a broom, a large native affair, and an immense, *witchy looking black cat*."

James went after Billy and the ponies. He found the boy wild with expectancy and excitement.

"If there'd been any fighting, if I had heered a single shot, I should have jined yous," he declared.

The three prisoners, still bound and gagged, were placed on horseback. Don Camilio also rode, whilst the balance of the party took turn-about — that is, all save Sergeant Gonzales, who never left Tuliga's side one instant. James and young Lessing carried the rifles and ammunition captured with the two sentries.

The return to camp was necessarily slow, but all went well until they reached the main road again, by the palm-tree, Tuliga's sign-post. Time had gone very rapidly, it was much later than they thought, which they instantly realized when suddenly the moon arose, making the highway before them as bright as day, and they still had a good two miles to traverse before they would strike the American outposts.

Mac, with one of the rifles, a Mauser, captured from the Filipino sentry, rode a little in advance, while James, with the other captured gun, brought up the rear.

They had accomplished half the distance, and were just congratulating themselves upon the danger being over, when suddenly from the jungle to their left there came a loud command to "Halt!!" and there sprang into the road a barefooted, wild-looking Filipino, his

gun in position, ready to fire, if his command were not instantly obeyed.

"Hurry on with the prisoners, Señor Lieutenant, while I stop and parley with this fellow," whispered Gonzales.

The young Mestizo might have succeeded in convincing the Filipino outpost that the little party hurrying up the road were what the Sergeant stoutly asserted them to be, an insurgent reconnoitering party, trying to draw out the American pickets; but unfortunately one of the Filipino prisoners managed just then to work the gag out of his mouth and yell wildly for help, shrieking out that these were "Americanos" who had taken them prisoners.

Mac silenced the man with the butt end of his rifle, but it was too late; ping! pang! came a bullet whistling over their heads; then a volley from the enemy concealed on either side of the road. Even as it was fired the young Mestizo Sergeant had sprung on the Filipino picket, knocking him senseless with a blow from the heavy army pistol he carried. Then, seizing his rifle and ammunition belt, Sergeant Gonzales had joined Mac and his little party in less time than it takes to tell it all.

It was wonderful how Mac rose to the occasion. Every idle tale he had heard since he landed in Luzon, of the tortures and mutilations inflicted upon American prisoners by the insurgents, flashed through his mind. He would rather be killed than captured, but he appeared calm, and gave his orders coolly. His quick eye had noted that the insurgent picket fire stopped at a group of big palm-trees. If he could stand off these insurgent pickets for a few moments only, he was sure the American outposts, hearing the firing, would come up to their rescue. He ordered the Sergeant to ride on ahead with Don Camilio, Billy, and the three prisoners; while James, young Harry Lessing, and himself, with the three captured rifles, would protect their retreat, a few minutes would really decide it all.

Mac made a brief, fervent act of contrition, it steadied his nerves, and gave him strength; he was ready now for whatever might come.

Another volley rang out at closer quarters; the insurgents were making sure that only three Americans were opposing them. As soon as they made sure of this, about twenty of them sprang into the road, calling out "Halt!" Our boys' reply was a splendidly

fired volley of three shots; exactly three of the enemy fell. Even in that supreme moment, Mac found himself thinking: "I hope I've only wounded my man."

"With a shout of fierce anger, firing as they advanced, the insurgents ran forward. Still none of the three boys had been hit, each one of them was firing as rapidly as possible. Suddenly Mac paused, and putting his hand to his ear,—

"*Cavalry! Boys, can't you hear?*" The sharp ears of the Filipino had heard the sound too; the quick, rythmical beat of horses trotting in time; for they halted, hesitated a moment, and then disappeared from view, still firing, however, just as around a turn in the road came a troop of the Nevada cavalry.

Taking in the situation at a glance, the young lieutenant in command of them, called to Sergeant Gonzales to halt with his party, while the troop, now on a mad run, dashed up the road to the rescue of the three young soldiers, who were so pluckily holding out against such odds.

Our boys, yelling with excitement, had fired their very last cartridge, just as the volunteers reached them, sending a deadly fire into the concealed trenches along the road.

The insurgents broke from their cover and ran wildly, pursued by the Nevada soldiers until they were recalled by the bugle.

The young volunteer lieutenant, a mere boy, himself, introduced himself to Mac, as recognizing in him the ranking officer in his party.

"I'm Jones, of "B" troop, Jimmy the fellows call me. And you are Mr. Williston, I know. Your Colonel is making an awful row over your being missing. There are a lot of scouting parties out, searching for you. Your governor, too, is wild."

"Yes, I am Mac Williston," replied our hero, quietly.

"I see you've been in a scrap and taken a few prisoners," continued the boy lieutenant."

"Yes, two or three," replied Mac, carelessly. "One of them you may have heard of, 'Tuliga, the Tondo Witch.'" "What!" ejaculated Lieutenant Jones, in great excitement. "Are you sure of it? Well, if you really have that woman, they will forgive you most anything up at headquarters. I've forgotten to tell you, and, indeed, I am awfully sorry to have to tell you, but I am ordered to put you in arrest, and confine your men in the guardhouse. It seems the moment you were reported missing, Colonel Kendall had an ink-

ling of what you were up to, and it didn't take long to find out that you and a small party of men had passed our outposts just at dark.

"I heard the Colonel tell your governor, who seemed crazy with anxiety, that he knew you had gone off on a romantic expedition to rescue some old Spanish Don —— something or other. But the trouble was, we couldn't tell in which direction you had gone, so we've been scouting around all night. When I heard the firing down this road, I knew I had found you."

"You came in the nick of time, sir, and I am awfully grateful to you. There isn't anyone to blame for this thing to-night, but myself. I hope they won't punish my men," said Mac.

"Well, they were pretty hot about you," was the young officer's candid reply.

"You are to go to your quarters, wherever and whatever they may be, a nipa hut or a tent, I suppose, in arrest, and report to-morrow morning at reveille to Colonel Kendall's headquarters.

"Very good, sir," said Mac, saluting courteously, and trying to stand straight. He reeled a bit, even as he spoke, and threw one hand over James' shoulder to steady himself.

"But I'm afraid, Lieutenant, I shall have to go to the hospital in arrest; that last volley caught me here," pressing his hand to his breast, just as a stream of blood showed scarlet in the bright moonlight, staining the white native blouse in which Mac had so lightheartedly disguised himself only a few hours before.

CHAPTER XIII.

MAC'S wound was not mortal, but it was a pretty close shave, the young surgeon who worked over him all that night assured Captain Williston. And it meant a long, weary siege. As soon as it was safe he was removed to the 2d Reserve hospital in Manila, which, in the old days, had been a Convent, and was now the most cheer ful, pleasant hospital in the service.

Here the nurse who had cared for little Esmerelda, was assigned to him, for which our boy was very grateful.

Esmé and her father, the old Don, came every day to see their young knight; they could not do enough to express their gratitude. Captain Williston spent every moment he could spare at his son's bedside. The "51st" had gone back to their camp at the Deposito, Lawton's expedition having thoroughly cleared the southern provinces of the insurgents.

To the hospital came all Mac's friends, as often as the doctor would allow them.

THE JINRIKISHA WHICH CHARMED BILLY. See Page 189.

James and Billy brought him news from the regiment; a whole lot of officers and men had been complimented in orders; amongst them Lieutenants Talbot and Desmond, whom we know. Corporal James Marvin, Private Harry Lessing, and MacLean Williston, volunteer aide, for the gallant rescue of Don Camilio and the capture of Tuliga.

It was as Lieutenant Jones had prophesied; so elated were the authorities over the successful capture of this Negritos woman, in whom the insurgents believed with superstitious faith, that they good-naturedly winked at Mac's escapade. He and his companions were at once released from arrest, and Sergeant Gonzales was given a substantial money reward with a position as captain in the native police force.

The morning after their hazardous expedition, while Mac was lying in the hospital, weak and unconscious from the loss of blood, some very dear friends of his, ten thousand miles away, were reading of his exploit in the evening paper which set it forth in huge black type.

BRILLIANT AND SUCCESSFUL EXPLOIT OF LIEUTENANT MACLEAN WILLISTON, IN CAPTURING THE NOTED "WITCH OF TONDO," TULIGA, THE

CANNIBAL WHO DINES DAILY UPON HER NUMEROUS VICTIMS,— ALSO RESCUING FROM HER CLUTCHES DON CAMILIO, A WEALTHY SPANISH PLANTER, CAPTURED BY THE INSURGENTS A YEAR AND A HALF AGO.

Whereupon followed a pretty accurate account of the adventure of our three boys — the account ended by saying that young Williston had been severely wounded.

The solemn old butler at Madam MacLean's stately summer home on the banks of the Hudson, was the first to see the paper that evening, and so excited and overcome was he that he rushed into the drawing-room without knocking, and frightening everyone nearly to death by exclaiming: "Master MacLean's bean 'aving a fight with canniballs and witches, and they've shot 'im severely."

That evening the old lady received telegrams from all the MacLean-Williston connection advising her to have that boy home at once. The result was that a cable reached her son-in-law the next day, which made Captain Williston smile; but which, if there had been any doubts heretofore as to Mac's return home, definitely settled the matter. Mac was to go home as soon as possible.

Madge saw the startling news first at Randall Barracks, and flew into the kitchen-way to tell Delia and Mike the great doings of their boy.

Mike listened to the glowing account in characteristic silence, only remarking, as Madge laid the paper aside:

"Phwats a few canniballs and witches and hathen Filipinos, more or less, to a MacLean and a Williston! Thim papers do be always making a fuss over nothing." But so proud of his boy was the old fellow that he started off at once to tell the tale of Mac's prowess to anyone who would listen to him.

Delia had been as characteristically talkative, and when Madge had read the short account through to her, a half a dozen times, she announced in her most determined voice that she was going in town "to tilegraph old Madame, the only one in the family who had rale good sinse, to sind that boy home at onct." So Delia's message was delivered with the rest, making the dear, stately old lady smile in the midst of her tears, for it read:

You're the only one in the family with common sinse, the only one they *all* mind, send me home that silly boy with his witches and canny balls. Charges collect.

The first week in the hospital, Mac got a big batch of home mail, amongst it the letters telling him what they all thought of his "Stowaway voyage;" there was quite a budget of them, and each and every writer save one gave him particular fits. The exception was Mike, and it was evident that a spirit of opposition and contrariness made the old fellow write as he did.

"Friend Mac," the characteristic epistle ran, "if you could hear the wiman folks cackle over your doings, if ye'd committed a murder they couldn't say worse of you. Stowaway indeed, my only regret is I wasn't wid you's, and so I'll tell Mrs. O'Hara *to her face.*"

Mac laughed heartily at this, for Mike was ever good at telling "Mrs. O'Hara *to her face,*" until he was actually before that good woman, when his courage oozed out rapidly.

Madge wrote "You dreadful bad example, delightful boy, how did you *ever* dare do it; The High School is wild over the knowledge that one of "*us*" is actually at the front. Oh! how I envy you — I inclose you two knots of High School colors, and these Sacred Heart badges for yourself and Mr. Marvin."

Delia scolded and loved her boy in funny, ill-spent sentences, which nearly brought the tears with the laughter. It was such a bit of *home*, and truth to tell, Mac was dreadfully homesick.

When a week or so later little Esmé, with her father, came to bid him farewell,— they, with several hundred rescued Spanish prisoners were to sail on a transport direct to Madrid — he fairly broke down and cried, and so his father found him when, a few moments later, he entered noiselessly, thinking Mac asleep. Captain Williston gathered the poor fellow up in his arms and soothed him as if he had been a little child.

"I am so ashamed of myself, daddy," sobbed poor Mac.

"You needn't be, son. I've seen older and stronger men than you break down with the same illness; I've even had a touch of it myself."

"Why, what do you mean, dad, dear?"

"Homesickness, lad; that hole in your chest will never heal up properly until you are safely back in the States, so I have just cabled Grandmother MacLean 'Going home, at once,' and signed it Mac. The Grant leaves next week, and I have made all the ar-

rangements for you to sail on her. Billy goes with you, and will go East with you.

"For the present you will stay with your grandmother, but when the High School opens, if you feel you would like to go on with your class, and graduate with it in June, Delia can open up the house for you. I shall be glad, my dear boy, to think of you at home and more — and I have a great piece of news, came in this last mail, which will reconcile you to going home, an appointment to West Point, for next June."

"How good you are to me, dad, dear," cried Mac, brokenly. "To think I have my appointment to West Point too; I don't believe even you know how I have wanted to go there, and now I see just how little I deserve it. My disobedience and recklessness has caused you so much anxiety.

"I have been doing a lot of thinking since I have been here, in the hospital, and Father Reynolds and I have had some good, long talks. I don't *mean* to do wrong and be reckless and disobedient; but I get an idea into my head, and I go ahead and carry out that idea, without stopping to think of consequences. Won't I work hard to do you credit at the 'Point.'"

"I know, my son," and Mac felt his father's hand gently take his. "The reason of all this is that you are only a boy, after all; you've been doing a man's work, Mac, and it is an ill thing to put an old head on young shoulders. Whatever we may feel in the excitement of the moment, war is an awful thing. The principal reason I have not sent you home long ago, was that I wanted you to realize, yourself, that your first disobedience in following me here against my will, was wrong. In fact, old fellow, the only cure for your disease was to let you have your own way, and cure yourself; and you have done well, Mac. You have been a brave, gallant, young soldier; a little lacking in discipline, perhaps, but time and West Point will cure that.

"And now I have preached you quite a little sermon, I will just finish by saying, go home and be a boy again, and may God bless and keep you, my dear son."

Billy was openly delighted at the thought of returning to the "ould counthry," as he called it. His warm, little heart was overflowing with love for "his Captain" and Mac, because they had given him a home. Never more would he be a poor, forlorn waif, adrift at the world's mercy.

Some ten days later two boys stood on the forward deck of the great transport Grant, as she lay in Manila Bay, just ready to start on her long homeward-bound voyage, across the wide Pacific. One, tall, thin, white-cheeked, and hollow-eyed, supported himself with a cane in one hand, while the other leaned on the arm of his companion. "Wave, Billy, wave hard, every moment until we are out of sight," he was saying, feebly but earnestly.

Then, as the great ship began to steam slowly around, both boys hurried aft, to keep in sight of the little group on shore, who were waving and calling to them.

"I can still distinguish dad and James; can you, Billy?"

"Yes, sor, I can."

"Billy, if I look the least bit as if I were going to weep, pinch me, pinch me black and blue. I wouldn't for worlds have my dear old dad catch his last glimpse of me with me sniveling, and — and — oh, dear, but I feel fearfully like it." Whereupon Billy administered the desired pinch.

Suddenly Mac exclaimed: "Look, Billy, James is wig-wagging some message." In the excitement of spelling out the message,

Mac forgot to feel blue and "weeping," the exact result young Marvin had intended.

"Good bye, and good luck, love to all at home," the message read. "Look in the left-hand corner of your steamer trunk."

Hurriedly fixing his handkerchief on the end of his cane, Mac cheerfully, but rather unsteadily wig-wagged back: "O. K., thanks," and soon the dear familiar faces began to grow dim and then slowly, *but surely*, vanished.

Mac turned, with an air of sorrowful relief.

"Well, Billy, the hardest part of the voyage is over now, the leaving dad behind. Come, we'll go below and look in the left-hand corner of my trunk."

He found there a long letter from both his father and James, written for every day of the voyage; half a dozen of the new books from home; a fine watch set with diamonds, of Spanish make, from Don Camilio, also a photograph from little Esmé, with a note from her saying she was coming soon to see dear Señor Mac and the lovely Billy, "and see their strange and wonderful country."

Gifts for all the dear friends at home completed the valuables in the left-hand corner.

When the *tiffin* gong sounded for the noon-

day meal, quite cheerfully our two boys hurried to their places at the Captain's table. They found it already filled, save for their own seats, and everyone looking at them, with evident but good-natured curiosity.

Mac understood the reason all eyes were turned towards Billy and himself, when the Captain, with a sweep of his hand, said to the guests at the table:

"Allow me, gentlemen, to present to you the very ones whose adventures I have been telling you. Gentlemen, 'The Two Stowaways.'"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE two boys found the homeward bound voyage delightful in every way. They made a stop of two days at Nagasaki, and Mac and Billy had all the "shore leave" they wanted, and a fat purse from which to draw; so they were perfectly happy. They took innumerable "jinrikisha" rides and explored the curious Japanese town from end to end, save one deserted, gloomy portion of it, which was roped off and placarded with the laconic but ominous warning, in half a dozen languages, "plague."

Mac bought gifts for all his friends, a gorgeous, huge-flowered kimono for Delia. It pleased the good woman beyond measure, though she could never be persuaded to don the "hathen thing," but used it as a "drape," as she called it, to decorate the wall of her little sitting room on the third floor. Madge was to have a dainty little blue and white tea set for her tea table, while Mac was bringing Mike a goodly store of the finest cigars made in Manila.

It was great fun choosing and buying the various gifts, but when they were done, Mac noticed a wistful look on Billy's usually merry face, so he asked, "What's the matter, old man? You look as glum as an owl."

"I was just a thinking, sor; I've no one on airth as would care to git a present from me."

"Well, never mind, Billy; that will soon be over, you know. You're coming home to friends, remember that; and you can give me all the presents you want, and won't I be glad to get them."

Mac was only joking, but his remark put an idea into Billy's grateful mind, for that very afternoon he gave Mac the slip, and bought half a dozen different articles, gorgeous to look at, but Mac never did find out quite what they were intended for.

Before leaving his father at Manila, Mac had a long talk with him regarding his own plans for the winter, and also about Billy's future. Captain Williston had written the boy's sad little story to Madam MacLean, and had received a reply from that stately but warm-hearted old lady only a few days before the boys sailed for home. She had generously offered to provide for Billy's future; she

could make no definite plans, however, until she had seen the lad and talked with him. She wanted both Mac and Billy to spend the winter with her. Billy should be sent to some good school, of course, while Mac could go daily to the famous West Point coach, Captain Bannister, a retired army officer who made a regular and successful business of getting boys into West Point. For these reasons, Madam wrote her son-in-law, she was prepared to close her city home for the winter. Captain Williston uttered an ejaculation of surprise when he read this, for he well knew how Madam hated the country in winter.

But to this part of the plan Mac demurred.

"Oh! dad, must I?" he exclaimed. "Of course, I am awfully fond of grandmother, and I will go and make her nice long visits, but to live with her, that's different; must I?"

Thereupon father and son talked the whole question over very carefully. Captain Williston thoroughly understood why a boy would chafe under the somewhat rigid etiquette of Madam MacLean's stately, old-fashioned establishment. The long, ceremonious seven-o'clock dinner, at which a boy could never by

any possibility appear in anything save his "Tuxedo," no matter if he had been coaching his "Eleven" up to the very last moment, was not always pleasant. No one could conceive of that stately, orderly mansion "cluttered up," as Delia would call it, with boyish treasures and traps. No, that plan would not do, Captain Williston mentally decided. Home, with faithful Delia and Mike to look after him, would be the best place for his boy; but for Billy, that was a different matter, as he explained to Mac. As his grandmother had undertaken the boy's future, she alone had the right to decide upon the plans for him.

Billy, naturally enough, was intensely interested in this "fairy godmother" who was going to do so much for him. Mac had a beautiful photograph of his grandmother in which the charm of her lovely high-bred face was brought out very distinctly, and oftentimes Mac would find Billy in his tent studying, with a look of awe, the somewhat haughty features of the little old grandmother, of whom not only himself, but the entire family, stood somewhat in fear.

Their last afternoon at Nagasaki, Billy had somewhat diffidently asked Mac if he thought "Madam," as he too had learned to

call her, would think it a piece of impudence, if he, Billy, were to buy her a present.

Mac declared she would be delighted, and guided Billy's somewhat crude taste, and purchased a really fine bit of Japanese ware in a cup and saucer, for the collection which was one of Madam MacLean's chief hobbies.

Every day which carried them nearer home brought renewed strength and vitality to our wounded hero. The first week out, with the chief surgeon's consent, Mac laid aside his crutches, saying to Billy with a happy laugh that had yet a slight catch in it:

"You know, old fellow, there was a time when the doctors thought I might have to use these always. I won't be half as much of a hero with only a cane and a slight limp, shall I?"

Then for an instant the fun and laughter went out of Mac's voice, as he said reverently:

"God has been awfully good to us, Billy."

"Yes, sor; He has," was the equally reverent reply. "Awful good, and to me, too. I don't see how I can ever pay Him back; but I'd like to mighty well."

Ah, warm, generous young heart, God found the way for you, Billy, all poor, lowly,

and ignorant, as you were; He found a wonderful and beautiful way "to pay Him back."

How many careless, ungrateful receivers of God's bounty ever think of the "paying back?"

The dawn of a beautiful August morning found the big transport, "Grant," safely anchored in the blue waters of the harbor at Honolulu, where they stayed three days, giving our boys a delightful outing, which perhaps they would have enjoyed more if the thought of home being so near had not obtruded itself, and made them impatient to be off again.

Of course they had no time, and would not have been allowed if there had been time, to visit the famous leper settlement at Molokai, where Father Damian lived his saintly life and died a truly martyr's death amongst his "poor children."

It was some two weeks later when the "Grant" sailed slowly through the "Golden Gate" to be greeted with the boom of the big guns at Alcatraz and the other harbor posts, and to receive a hearty, if shrill welcome from the various tugs, pilot boats, and quartermaster launches which were on the

lookout to be the first to welcome the great troop ship.

Our boy travelers found quite a crowd of friends and relatives to welcome them. Captain and Mrs. MacLean, of course, with all the MacLean cousins, and, amongst the crowd on the wharf, Billy was proud and touched to see Father Howard's energetic, young figure waving his clerical hat as wildly and enthusiastically as any one else.

Our boys spent a brief, happy week in San Francisco, both made so much of by every one who knew them and their story, that the only wonder was their poor heads were not quite turned. Billy made the rounds to tell his old-time friends and companions of the wonderful new future which awaited him "back East"; a mystic phrase which always called up to these children of the far West a mysterious land of delight, where all that was good and desirable on earth was to be had. Father Howard had an hour's serious talk with his former pupil and protégé, and to him Billy confided the secret aspirations of a singularly generous, grateful soul.

It was dusk of a hot August evening when the "Chicago Limited" stopped for one instant to let off our heroes at "Moorelands,"

the station for "Mooreland House," as Madam MacLean's beautiful country place was called. Both were named for the old family places in their beloved Scotland, where the old country MacLeans still lived and flourished in spite of the fact that their family had remained true to Scotland's ancient faith, for it was the boast of the MacLeans that they were as good Catholics as they were Scotsmen.

As Mac hopped nimbly off the train, balancing himself with his cane and Billy's friendly shoulder, a young girl, gowned in the daintiest of fresh pink organdies, rushed forward with a sob, exclaiming, "O, Mac dear, you can't half know how glad we are to have you safe home," giving him a hearty handclasp.

Madam MacLean, pleasant and smiling, hastened forward to greet her favorite grandson, saying, "I thought you'd be pleased, laddie, to have some one from home to greet you. And so this is Billy, is it?" turning to the boy who stood shy and embarrassed. "I'm glad to welcome you *home*, my boy," said the stately little lady; and Billy's heart went out to her at that word "home"; and from that moment he accepted Madam as his liege

lady, to whom he was never disloyal in thought, word, nor deed.

Madge added her warm greetings to Madam's, and between them they made the shy, awkward boy feel at home, though the sight of the solemn old butler gave poor Billy terrible qualms.

Madam excused him from dinner the first few days until he should grow a little more accustomed to his new way of life; but it was only a brief reprieve, for Madam had determined that her young protégé was to be brought up as a gentleman and have a good chance in life She had liked his honest, merry face from the first; but when the trunks had arrived and Billy had diffidently presented his offering of the cup and saucer, her heart was entirely won. She was a wealthy old lady, with ample to spare for one of God's poor laddies, even after she gave generously to her own children.

What happy days the three young people spent. Driving and boating were their chief amusements, for Mac was not able to do much more than hobble around on his cane, with either Madge or Billy to lend a hand.

But the weeks flew by all too swiftly. School was to open September 25th, and

Mac was determined to be there on the opening day if it were possible. Madge was equally anxious, for the High School was planning a grand welcome to their very own hero from the Philippines.

Madam MacLean had not opposed Mac's return home, somewhat to his surprise, but she had decided to keep Billy with her. He was to enter Fordham at the midwinter term, and until then was to have a private teacher to enable him to enter his class without disadvantage.

As September drew to a close, a quiet but happy little group of people sat around the big open wood fires that the cool evenings made enjoyable. How the three young people chattered! The little white-haired lady in the background smiled as she listened to their talk. Madge was very skillful in drawing from the two boys their various adventures in the Philippines; and she never tired of listening to the story of Don Camilio's rescue, and of how they found little Esmeralda and delivered her from her cruel tyrant, the "Witch of Tondo."

Even unimpressionable "Madam" would shudder at Mac's vivid description of the witch's murderous den in the depths of the

tropical jungles, with its horrible frieze of human skulls, and the weird black cat, which, panther-like, walked ceaselessly back and forth before these frightful relics.

A letter had come from Don Camilio stating that he and Esmé had been welcomed home by their friends and relatives as ones from the dead.

"I see sad changes," Don Camilio wrote, "but I pray that before long my Esmé and myself may come in peace to your country, which, after all is said, owes so much to mine, — and see and thank you once more for all that you have done for us." A wish which all those present echoed most heartily.

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The principal train from the south arrives at Randall, the chief town in northern New York, located on Lake Champlain, at 6:10 P. M. exactly. There is always considerable bustle and commotion every evening when the New York train arrives; but one evening in late September, the few and scattered passengers on the Montreal train were quite excited to find the whole town, so it seemed to them, gathered at the station to meet the incoming train.

A brass band was in attendance, which struck up the stirring air of "See, the Conquering Hero Comes," as a tall thin youth, who used a cane and walked with a limp, got off, followed by a stately, little white-haired lady, and a very pretty tall slim girl of sixteen, while a shy-looking boy, laden with wraps and bags, helped the porter in seeing that none of their numerous belongings were left behind.

A wild school yell rent the air and mingled with shouts of

"Randall! Randall!
Rah! Rah! Rah!
What's the matter with MacLean?"

and its invariable answer of "HE'S ALL RIGHT," was the noise of giant crackers booming out a military salute to the High School hero.

Mac was pushing his way slowly through a sea of welcoming faces, shaking hands right and left, when suddenly a voice was heard above all the tumult, saying:

"What's the use o' bein' a man at all, Michael O'Hara, if ye'r can't knock me down a few o' these trespassin' cratures that won't let me get to me bye."

"Delia, Delia, here I am," and a way was made through the crowd, and in another

moment the warm-hearted, devoted old nurse had "her bye" in her arms.

"Most extraordinary people," remarked a traveling Englishman from the rear of the Pullman where he had been watching the scene before him in bewildered amazement. "*Most* extraordinary, don't you know."

"Some base ball hero, I fancy, knocked out in a game, and the town turns out to welcome him."

But when the smiling porter explained who Mac was, the Englishman became quite excited and cheered as wildly as the rest.

Mac was banqueted, toasted, serenaded, and cheered until long after midnight, for heroship has its trials; nevertheless, it was a very happy though tired boy who knelt before the familiar little shrine in his own room,—everything just as he had left it months ago. The ebony Crucifix with the sacred, agonized, ivory figure of Christ gleamed out in the moonlight, a ray of which fell upon his mother's dear face as she smiled at her boy —a face ever beautiful, sweet, and young— from the quaint old-fashioned miniature in its frame of burnished gold.

The little statue of the Virgin Mother with her Divine Child stood beside his mother's

portrait, as if in tender love of her who had been taken away so young from her dear ones.

As Mac gazed lovingly at these familiar objects, dear and sacred to him from his boyhood, his eyes were wet with sudden tears which yet were not all sad, as he prayed fervently that he might become what his absent father and his dead mother in Heaven would desire for him, a good man.

He fell asleep with his mother's rosary in his thin brown hands, which had not yet gotten rid of their tropical tan; and so Delia found him when the last thing before she went to bed she went in to "tuck him in."

"My darlint," the old woman whispered softly, and she kissed him gently on the forehead. "Shure, Miss Mary, dear, you'll be knowing how I love the bye; your bye and mine; and help me, a poor ignorant old woman, to do my best for our bye."

And Mac slept peacefully on, with one stirring chapter of his life closed. "The Two Stowaways" had returned to their home at last.

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